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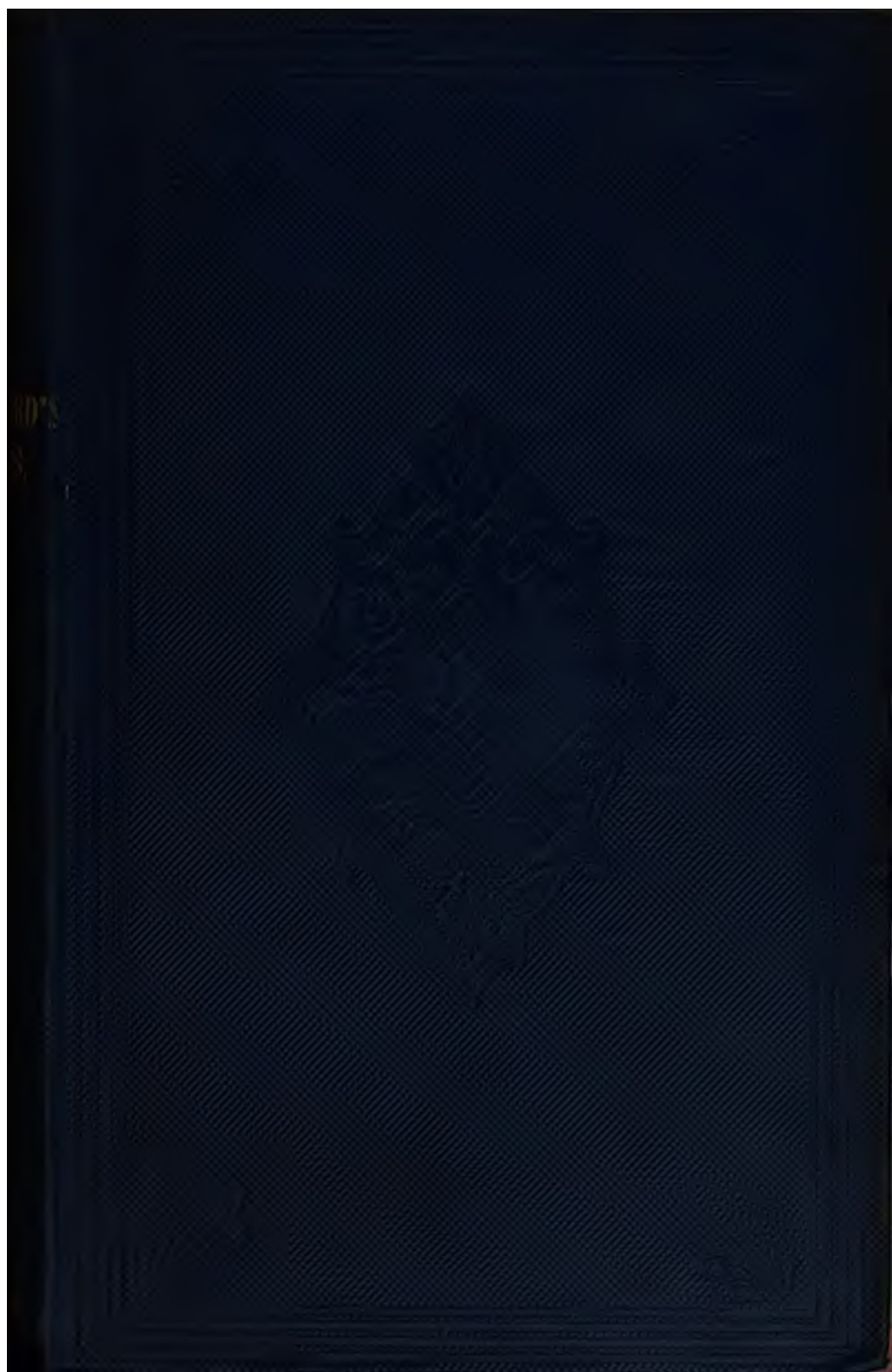
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LADY GRANARD'S NIECES

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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LADY GRANARD'S NIECES.

CHAPTER I.

And they were friends ;—but yet a stranger couple,
The sun ne'er shone upon ; most opposite
In character and habits, one was proud,—
So proud, that even unto a lady's smile
The sad and serious impress of his face
Chang'd not ; though many a fair one strove
To make that dark and passionate brow relax
The long deep line of care that mark'd it.
There was a curl upon his upper lip,
That spoke sarcastically unto those who scann'd
His features well ; and yet at times a shade
Of gentler passions stole across that face
And deepen'd into tenderness, until
'Twas lost again ; as fadeth from the sky,
When darken'd with the lightning's cradle clouds,
The sunbeam that had lived in brightness there.
The other was a youth of gentle mien,
Fastidious to excess ; his long, fair hair
Was comb'd right carefully adown his face,
And the gay doublet, slash'd in many a cut
Not often met with, 'spoke a woman's care

Bestow'd upon the garments that he wore ;
 Languid and slow he mov'd across the room
 As if each step were agony, and pain'd
 The slight and delicate frame so gaily deck'd.
 Then sinking on a chair, he pass'd his hand,
 So white and gemm'd with rings, amidst the hair
 That cluster'd o'er his brow, as dreamingly
 His dark eye wander'd complacently o'er
 Himself. Alas ! for human vanity !
 Yet in that eye there was a radiant sparkle,
 That shone full brightly in its depths of blue,
 And spoke a spirit high which slumber'd there.

* * * *

And yet, good sooth, she is a lovely dame,
 Although you like her not, Malvolio.

* * * *

This comes of young betrothals,—
 Why should we strive to guide the heart to love ?
 The heart unfetter'd shrinks from slavery ;
 In time 'twill seek the thralldom that it shunn'd
 And love its chains ; yet must it freely chuse
 The goddess of its deep idolatry—
 We cannot make it worship where we would.

MANUSCRIPT.

It was towards the autumn of the year eighteen-
 hundred and thirty-seven, on a cold and wintry-

looking night, that two English gentlemen sat enjoying the thorough and searching warmth of a large and comfortable fire in the coffee-room of the Royal Hotel at Calais. By the cloaks, shawls, carpet-bags, and divers other necessary travelling accompaniments scattered about the room, they seemed, either to have been preparing for a journey, or to have accomplished one; and being the sole occupants of the apartment, for all the other inmates had retired to rest, it being then long past midnight, they had drawn their chairs close before the blazing hearth, and were evidently engaged in earnest conversation. There were the papers of the day on the table; but who, on a dull evening towards the end of October with a pleasant companion by his side, would have perused their long and often uninteresting columns? Besides, in the present case, there would have been less excuse than in general for indulging in such misanthropical conduct, as the two travellers were friends.

To avoid being mysterious where there is no necessity for it, (as mystery generally generates into ennui) I shall at once disclose the purport of their presence in a foreign land, and introduce them to the reader in their proper names.

Charles Lennox and Everard Effingham, after the absence of two or three years spent on the continent, were returning home to England; Everard to fulfil his engagements with a young lady—his intended bride; Charles to meet his uncle, Colonel Lennox, who, after having spent the greater part of his life abroad in the service of the East India Company, was then about to re-visit his native land. The parents of both were dead; those of Charles Lennox died during his infancy, and he was left to the guardianship of his uncle, by whom he was adopted as his heir, and placed under the care of his sister, a maiden lady resident in England; and with her he continued to live till he was sent, at the request of the Colonel,

to a public school. The truth was, Colonel Lennox had long suspected, from the perusal of the letters his sister forwarded as the juvenile effusions of his nephew, the total ignorance of Charles in all boyish accomplishments; and finding, after strict enquiries into the matter, that such was really the case, and that Miss Lennox, considering him rather as her niece than her nephew, had instilled into his mind a few principles of female vanity and weakness—such as an over scrupulous attention to dress and to himself—in exact contradiction to the precepts he had enjoined, the dismissal of her superintendence over his studies was thought proper, and he was sent where, amidst the companions of his own age, the symptoms of his early education, which had so much alarmed his uncle, might be eradicated.

The measure was in a great degree successful; but still there remained in Lennox an affectation of langour, a superciliousness of behaviour to those who were not his most intimate acquaintance which had not been entirely

overcome, and that provoked a smile even from his friends. Amongst these was Everard Effingham, with whom he had formed an attachment at school, who had at first despised, and afterwards as much loved the delicate and idle, yet withal high-spirited boy. To Everard; indeed, Charles Lennox owed more than to those to whose care he was confided; for by him he was taught not to value himself upon the silly and superficial acquirements he had learnt under the tutelage of his aunt, but to force his dormant energies to a greater and nobler use; and his exertions were repaid; what first he had undertaken to please his friend, he afterwards pursued to please himself. Yet still the old fault of affectation hung about him, and not even the derision of Effingham could repress it. In his disposition he was generous and ardent; sanguine, yet decisive; impetuous, but with a perfect self-command over his passions in the greater, and very little in the lesser anxieties of life.

As to his personal appearance, it was a singu-

larly striking one. His figure was tall and slender; his eyes were of the deepest blue; and his light flaxen hair fell in long, natural curls round features of the most exquisite beauty. But their delicate proportions, heightened as they were by the softness and transparency of his skin scarcely tinged by the faintest colour, would have been almost too effeminate for a man, had not the expression of his countenance been relieved by a dark brown moustache upon the beautifully formed upper lip, and by eye brows and eye lashes of a yet deeper shade. Such was Charles Lennox in his one and twentieth year.

The face and form of Everard Effingham afforded a striking contrast to those of his friend; he was of a dark complexion, with large black eyes and raven hair, and his age seemed to be about seven or eight and twenty, for his tall and fully developed person betokened the zenith of youth. The father of Everard was descended from a proud and noble family,

and from him he had inherited that pride which formed the basis of his character, and which clouded many a generous feeling that lay hid beneath it. Old Mr. Effingham lived to see his son arrived at man's estate, and dying had extorted a promise from him to discharge a debt of gratitude he owed one Mr. Harolde by espousing his only daughter, then a girl of sixteen; and so earnest was he in his determination that he even enforced a kind of betrothal to take place between them in his presence. He died; and Everard, who had disliked the engagement from the very beginning, travelled abroad for some years, accompanied by Charles, as a pretext to postpone its fulfilment. The circumstances under which the promise was made forbade any attempt on the part of Everard to annul it, for Mr. Harolde was the oldest and most confidential friend of his father, and had once saved his life at the peril of his own, when in danger of being drowned by missing his footing on board a pleasure yacht.

But many other acts of friendship besides this had endeared him to old Effingham, who, when he saw, in the latter part of his life, the circumstances of his friend becoming so embarrassed as to compel him to give up the establishment he had hitherto kept, and to forego the advantages and society of the sphere of life in which he had so long moved, while every offer of pecuniary assistance was rejected, found no other way to express his gratitude, than to adjure his son to consider the portionless Ada Harolde as his wife and as the future mistress of Effingham Manor.

From that period till the evening when our tale commences, five years had elapsed; Mr. Harolde had become the possessor of a considerable fortune inherited from a distant relation, and no longer restrained by the thought of his interest on the subject being imputed to mercenary motives, was repeatedly reminding Effingham, by letters, of his long standing engagement with his daughter, who, at length, could no

longer procrastinate, and therefore had pronounced his departure from the continent to be immediate.

On the night our travellers are first presented to the reader, they intended to start by the packet for Dover ; but the appointed time when the said packet was to leave the harbour being two o'clock in the morning, not over enamoured with the pleasures of a sea voyage, enhanced as they were likely to be by a high wind that could be distinctly heard whistling and howling in the court-yard, they had resolved to defer their departure until the very last moment, and were now patiently awaiting the signal to embark.

" Yet it is not such a disagreeable engagement, Everard," said Charles after a short pause in the conversation, during which they had both been intently gazing on the fire ; Charles with a half smile upon his face, and Everard with an expression of impatience. " Yet it is not such a disagreeable engagement

—she is young and beautiful, and what would you have more?”

“ I have no inclination to marry at present,” Everard replied. “ Young and beautiful !” he repeated, “ yes—I acknowledge that she is so ; but to be tied to a certain time ; to have no heart or hand in the matter !”

“ Well, it is rather annoying, I allow,” said his companion ; “ certainly, I should like to have a wife of my own choosing ; but as your father provided one for you—”

“ I never would have acquiesced in his determination,” interrupted Effingham, “ never ! had it been made at any other time ; but on his death-bed, could I refuse that which he said would alone make him die peacefully ?”

“ No, no,” replied Charles ; “ however, I should think the match may yet be broken off ; now that Mr. Harolde is enriched by the property you have mentioned, his daughter is placed above the reach of that poverty under which the promise was given.”

“ But such a proposition could never come

from me," said Everard; "no—the only chance I have left is, that Ada Harolde may refuse to submit to the engagement."

"Which is not very likely to happen," laughed Lennox, glancing at the handsome face of Everard as he spoke, "if you do not render yourself very, *very* disagreeable."

"Nonsense," answered Effingham; "yet do I most sincerely hope she will—I hope to Heaven she will! I could never love her as my wife."

"Why not?" demanded Charles. "It were easy to love her, I should imagine; for of all the beautiful women I have seen, she is the most beautiful, if I may judge from her portrait. Ah! here it is," said he, as he unwound from his neck a black ribbon to which a small miniature was suspended—"you gave it to me the other day, and I forgot to return it. "Yes," he continued, "she must be very beautiful; and just the style of beauty I should have thought you would have liked, Everard, —large blue eyes, veiled by lashes of the

darkest hue ; hair of a golden brown, tressed into one soft braid upon the white arched brow ; the cheek pale, yet lovely in its pallor ; and the rosy mouth, curved into a sweet and gentle smile—oh ! she must be very, very beautiful, Everard !”

“ You at least seem to think so,” he replied, with a smile ; and then added, impatiently ; “ I allow the portrait to be beautiful, but—”

“ Is not the original so ?” asked Charles, quickly.

“ The features are the same,” rejoined Effingham ; “ but their expression is so lifeless—so soulless ! I have known her from childhood—that is to say, we have met occasionally, as children—yet I have never seen her other than when I left England—cold, calm, and passionless. I remember her well the day we were betrothed ; she stood immovable while the ceremony was performed—a perfect statue, Charles. We had to present each other with a ring, as a sign of our pledged faith ; (for my father was bent upon accomplishing the match,

and having observed a reluctance on my part, found means to engage me to the performance of it by every bond that he could possibly suggest) well, during the whole time we were together, not once upon her brow did the slightest trace of feeling dawn, nor did her voice betray the faintest emotion, even when she spoke the words that bound her as mine. Yes, calm and collected, she stood there totally indifferent to everything around her;—how can I love her, Charles?—a being without the semblance of a heart!”

“Poor Ada Harolde!” said Charles, with somewhat of a malicious smile upon his face; “because you were not perfectly entranced with the happiness of being the wife of one who never sought to know your worth—of one who scarcely wished to win your love, you are set down at once as insensible to all the true and fervent feelings that generally are shrined deep within a woman’s heart.”

Everard looked up rather angrily; and Charles continued to gaze at the fire, upon

which his eyes had been fixed since the commencement of his ejaculation.

"Did I not tell you she is always thus?" he asked, impatiently, "not only in reference to me, but also to every one else."

"Are you sure of that?" answered Charles—"did you ever observe her conduct narrowly?"

"No," returned Effingham, "no—why should I have done so? You can easily see her character in her features and manners."

"That would never satisfy me, Everard," answered Charles. "Ah! a woman's heart is rarely well read, and her looks and words often misconstrued; there are some who feel much, yet seldom show it; and a thousand pangs may be throbbing beneath the brow that outwardly is all placidity."

And Charles sighed.

"What do you mean?" said Everard, in a tone of marked surprise; "this is too sentimental for you. Charles Lennox turned moralizer! What could have engendered such thoughts as these?"

“Auld Lang Syne!” returned Charles; “I was thinking of poor Aunt Lennox, Everard. She always upheld the truth and constancy of women; from her I learnt to appreciate their worth, and to read their thoughts of pain and pleasure, whether concealed beneath a calm indifference of mien, or cloaked with the tones of frivolity and mirth. Poor Aunt Lennox! often and often she used to say to me, ‘Mind, nephew Charles, if ever you come to such straits in life, (which God preserve you from!) that may require the help and consolation of a friend, choose a woman; they say little, but they do much.’”

“In the way of mischief,” interrupted Everard; “but finish your lecture.”

“No lecture,” replied Charles, gaily, “only a few observations.”

“Tiresome ones!” cried Effingham.

“Because applicable to you,” rejoined his friend. “But let me conclude. I have passed a great part of my life under a woman’s care,

and have been more in their society than you, though you are mine elder—what I mean to say is this : I know more of the inward workings of their minds than you do ; and let me tell you, Everard, you may be months and months in the company of a woman, and yet not know her real character after all. From what I have heard of this Miss Harolde, I feel sure you judge her harshly ; you have decided the question against her on very slight grounds ; and, mark my words ! if your present engagement ever comes to an open rupture, you will regret it. There is your miniature ; and may you, if you wed her, prize it more highly than you do at present. One thing is certain, however—you will not long continue to gaze on such a beautiful face with impunity.”

“ Have you finished ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Then let me ask you a question ; If not in Miss Harolde’s countenance and manners,

where am I to look for the true expression of her feelings?"

"Ah, ha! that is my secret; but I do not care revealing it to you, Everard. Know then it is in the eyes of a woman I seek the truths I wish to know—never anywhere else; for the eyes cannot lie as calmly as the tongue; and if you watch them well they will invariably betray the true state of the heart."

"I hope I shall profit by your kindness," answered Everard, ironically; "it is a seasonable one; for, as I must marry Ada, I should like to know whether when she says one thing she means another, or not. You are Ada's defender, Charles, yet you have imagined a very uncaptivating character for her, with all your zeal in her behalf, reserved and distrustful! for is it not distrustful to keep pent in the recesses of the heart every emotion that might give pleasure to those who could share in it? or that of pain from the generous bosom that would soothe it?"

“Not in a woman,” answered Charles; “her sorrows only seem more sacred when shrined from the view of the world. But come,” continued he, yawning, “our conversation is becoming too serious; you inveigled me into it, Everard; and—hush! what noise is that? Pshaw! it is the diligence that was to arrive in time for the packet—*quel ennui!* we shall be interrupted!”

CHAPTER II.

Amongst the rest there was a youthful maid
Whose every gesture spoke timidity ;
She shrank from notice as some fair young flower
Hides its fresh charms from the intruder's gaze :
And she was fair ; but yet her loveliness
Dwelt more in the full soul that beam'd in ev'ry look,
Than in the face which faultless was not deem'd.

MANUSCRIPT.

THE words of Charles were verified ; in less than ten minutes the saloon was filled with passengers, just alighted from the cumbrous vehicle, wearied and impatient from a long and heavy journey. The tranquillity of the apartment was changed into a confused

noise ; orders were given and countermanded ; waiters were hurrying to and fro ; the clattering of knives and plates created a jingling clamour that accorded well with the different toned voices of the new comers ; while the several lamps were replenished with light, and all was bustle and confusion. But gradually the disturbance subsided, for the arrival of supper caused a general silence throughout the room ; all were engaged in discussing the refreshments set before them ; and saving when a neighbour was asked to pass some dish or sauce, or a question was hastily asked relative to the business of the day, and which was as hastily answered, no one spoke to entertain either the company or himself. As for Effingham and Charles, they retained their former seats by the fireside ; and confidential conversation being now no longer practicable, they amused themselves by leisurely surveying the persons before them. Their attention, however, was soon drawn from the eager crowd round the

supper table to a lady, evidently French, who sat apart from the rest, seeming to claim no connexion with any one save an old woman, apparently her servant, who from time to time looked up from the well-filled plate before her, and glanced towards the sofa where she sat, each time being acknowledged by her mistress with a slight smile. She was very young, and very pretty; and there was a sweetness about her features peculiarly prepossessing; while her every movement was endued with a grace so fascinating, that once noticed, the glance was rivetted upon her as by a spell. There was however, an uneasy timidity in her manner, which seemed to infer that the situation in which she was placed was both new and disagreeable to her; every moment the large, dark eye would cast from beneath its jetty fringe an unquiet glance round the apartment, and the soft cheek flush with a crimson glow, as the small, white hand drew the folds of the rich cashmere shawl wrapped over her light and beautiful figure yet

closer around her in feverish anxiety. Once or twice as Charles was looking that way she met his eye, and colored so deeply, and with such increased uneasiness, that he in pity strove to resist the temptation of gazing at her, though the very lovely face which he thus avoided recurred continually to his mind, and bade him send a stealthy glance of admiration to the corner of the room where the fair Frenchwoman sat.

Yes, she was certainly French; Charles could have sworn it, though not a single word had passed her lips since she entered; but the draping of the shawl round her light and supple figure, the tightly fitting dress that showed the exquisite fall of the shoulders, though it buttoned close up to the beautiful throat, and the peculiar make of the small and delicate shoe, clothing a foot of fairy-like proportions, satisfied him at the first glance that the young and elegant woman before him had been bred in the centre of Parisian fashion.

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All things must have an end : even the disagreeable questions of Everard, addressed to Charles upon the subject of the reverie into which he had fallen, and the supper of the hungry travellers, ended. Gradually the table and the apartment became deserted ; some went to look after their luggage, and others to secure good berths for themselves on board the packet ; but the lady and her servant remained ; and as she stirred not, Charles Lennox did not think fit to do so either, although repeatedly reminded by Effingham that it was time to see whether their trunks had been conveyed on board the vessel, and who, at length finding all his remonstrances useless, was obliged to look after them himself.

Meanwhile the lady had opened one of the newspapers that lay on the table, and was apparently engaged in reading ; but her abstracted gaze betokened a wandering mind ; and Charles, who every instant was becoming more and more interested, easily perceived

this ; and taking up another with the pretext of perusing it, continued to watch, without fear of detection. In this agreeable employment he continued, wondering how such a lovely and attractive female, whose dress and appearance bespoke an acquaintance with a higher station of rank than that which her present situation seemed to intimate, could thus travel alone and unattended, save by an old serving woman, who could be no sort of protection to her, until his pleasing scrutiny was, to his infinite annoyance, interrupted by the return of Everard, who, having quickly accomplished his self-imposed task, now forced the unwilling Charles into conversation.

“ Will you answer me ?” said Everard, rather impatiently, for it was the fourth time he had asked the question—“ Will you answer me, Charles?—where is your cloak ?”

“ Oh, I beg your pardon,” he replied —
“ what did you say ?”

"Where is your cloak?—John cannot find it."

"Cannot he?"

"No—where is it?"

"Here, I believe—no, no, I mean upstairs."

"So! we shall come to the truth at last. And now where is your travelling cap?"

"Confound that fellow John! why does he not search for it?"

"He has: but he says you put your things in such unaccountable places that he can never find them."

"Pshaw! it is only his laziness—yet, let me see—I do not perfectly recollect, but I think I put it in the inner pocket of my great coat."

"In the inner pocket of your great coat! Ah! there is another proof of your aptitude under Aunt Lennox's tuition—the dear little fellow! always so neat! oh! he is her own darling, that he is!"

"There, there—leave me alone, Everard."

"Leave you alone! Why it is time to start;—but what pre-occupies you?"

And receiving no answer, Effingham watched the countenance of Charles, until he saw his eyes fixed upon the young French lady.

"This is too bad!" cried he, laughingly; "whenever a pretty girl can be seen, you neither hear, nor care for anything else; and I verily believe you would cross the Channel at any time to behold one for half a second!"

"Well, and so I would!" said Charles, starting up, and laying his hand on Everard's arm in the energy of his speech—"so I would! Beauty is my idol; and never, never had she such an ardent worshipper as I; my eyes and my heart bow before her."

"That I deny!" interrupted Effingham; "your eyes may, though generally indeed you fix them with a pretty bold stare on the face of every woman you meet, if she is not absolutely ugly; but your heart! a thousand images of

supper table to a lady, evidently French, who sat apart from the rest, seeming to claim no connexion with any one save an old woman, apparently her servant, who from time to time looked up from the well-filled plate before her, and glanced towards the sofa where she sat, each time being acknowledged by her mistress with a slight smile. She was very young, and very pretty; and there was a sweetness about her features peculiarly prepossessing; while her every movement was endued with a grace so fascinating, that once noticed, the glance was rivetted upon her as by a spell. There was however, an uneasy timidity in her manner, which seemed to infer that the situation in which she was placed was both new and disagreeable to her; every moment the large, dark eye would cast from beneath its jetty fringe an unquiet glance round the apartment, and the soft cheek flush with a crimson glow, as the small, white hand drew the folds of the rich cashmere shawl wrapped over her light and beautiful figure yet

closer around her in feverish anxiety. Once or twice as Charles was looking that way she met his eye, and colored so deeply, and with such increased uneasiness, that he in pity strove to resist the temptation of gazing at her, though the very lovely face which he thus avoided recurred continually to his mind, and bade him send a stealthy glance of admiration to the corner of the room where the fair Frenchwoman sat.

Yes, she was certainly French; Charles could have sworn it, though not a single word had passed her lips since she entered; but the draping of the shawl round her light and supple figure, the tightly fitting dress that showed the exquisite fall of the shoulders, though it buttoned close up to the beautiful throat, and the peculiar make of the small and delicate shoe, clothing a foot of fairy-like proportions, satisfied him at the first glance that the young and elegant woman before him had been bred in the centre of Parisian fashion.

lady made a false step, and Charles, who had not once lifted his eyes from off her figure since the first moment of their setting out from the hotel, sprang forward to assist her; but ere he was at her side she had recovered herself; and when he, after many enquiries, offered his arm as a support over the rough stones, she gently declined it, saying that the help of her servant, on whom she was leaning, was sufficient. Charles in disappointment fell back to Effingham.

“No success?” said Everard, with a smile.

“None,” answered he; “she would not even let me assist her.”

“I supposed as much,” rejoined Everard.

“Why will you thrust yourself forward as you do, Charles? you are only deemed by the women an impertinent fellow.”

“Not at all,” returned he; “for though they may seem angry at the time, they always feel flattered by such attentions; women, you know, can put on a frown at pleasure;

and I will relate you a little anecdote to prove it. There was a young lady I once knew on very intimate terms; well, one night as we were sitting talking together at a small evening party, I observed a gentleman standing opposite her, who without the least reserve was staring her full in the face; she, meanwhile pretending to be earnestly engaged with our mutual *tete-a-tete*, which, by the bye, was not at all an interesting one. At last, however, she raised her eyes, and suddenly fixed them upon him with a look of startled indignation, and the gentleman, I suppose, paralyzed by their expression, instantly departed to the other end of the room.

“ ‘ Did you ever see such a fool ? ’ she said to me. ‘ It was certainly very disagreeable,’ I answered, catching her meaning at once, ‘ but I thought at first that you seemed more pleased than annoyed by his impertinence, and therefore I forbore to notice it; however, I beg pardon for such a supposition, as I saw you

just now annihilate him with a look.' 'Oh! you were right in the first instance,' she replied, laughing, 'I was not displeased at his gaze, but with the expression of his countenance, which was that of a simpleton. I did not perceive this directly; when I did, I was annoyed at having been the gazing stock of a fool, and so finished his otherwise pleasing piece of impudence, by the power of the frown you saw me assume. If he had been a man of sense, or even of striking personal appearance, I should have acted very differently; I would have continued to talk to you with perfect unconcern, seeming unconscious of everything save our conversation; though at the same time deriving great pleasure from knowing the direction of the gentleman's eyes was towards me.' This is a fact, Everard."

"A strange one I should imagine! I hope that no woman in whom I took an interest would feel the same upon the subject."

Charles slightly elevated his shoulders as he replied—

“Everyone of them would, be assured. Another thing—what they call love, is vanity more or less; for vanity, I really believe in this world is the basis of all the affections; all, all spring from the same seed.”

“A singular and comfortable code of morals you seem to have,” said Everard, “but here we are—there is the packet!”

He turned as he spoke; but Charles was no longer at his side. Yet if he did not see him, he very soon heard his voice in earnest expostulation with some men, who were gathered round the luggage, and who proved to be the Custom-house officers.

“But I give you my word of honour that there is nothing in that box save a few old books, my good fellow.”

“Sir, we must look into it, we cannot let it pass unexamined. Besides, it looks a very suspicious sort of thing—plain deal and nailed

down—we must look into it,” said one of the men.

“I will not allow it—John, take that box away!” rejoined Charles.

“Stand where you are, my man; don’t stir!” was the answer, which partly addressed to the servant of Charles, enraged his master still more—“don’t stir, you’ll be badly off, if you do.”

“Charles, for Heaven’s sake, be quiet!” said Everard, coming up at the moment, “you are losing time; come away, and let them do it; they will have all the trouble.”

“But the insolence of the fellows is so provoking, Everard! and I packed that box myself, too;—they will disarrange everything.”

“Do not be foolish, Charles, pray—come with me,” said Everard, “John will see whether it is all right.”

And he attempted to lead him away, but Charles would not be so persuaded.

“No, no,” he said, “do you think I will

allow my books and papers to be tossed about in that manner?—No, I must see to it myself—John, where is my cloak?”

“Here, sir!”

“Very well; spread it over yonder trunk. And now,” continued Charles, turning to the officers of the Custom-house, who were uncording the box that had given rise to the contention, “you will please to deposit all the articles that you remove from the box upon it, so as not to soil them.”

And the men grumblingly assented, while Charles stood by, and watched their proceedings.

“Take care, that is a box of water colours, and there is a glass inside—the leaves of that book are loose—tie them up as they were before.”

And sundry other cautions were elicited from Charles as the men continued their search; until finding that the account given of the contents of the box was true, they began to repack

them. In their haste, however, to accomplish this, several things were not laid in their proper places, greatly to the discomfiture of Charles, who continued to preside over the labour to which the men had condemned themselves; but ere he had time to express his indignation in words, the signal to start was given from the packet, and Everard at once dragged him away, while the trunk, half closed, was conveyed on board with the rest of the luggage.

Whether the foregoing little incident; by allowing free scope to the vexation he had experienced in the rejection of his attentions by the young French lady, relieved the spirits of Charles from a certain inward acidity of temper that had lately sparkled in his discourse or not, cannot now be determined; but it was remarked by Everard, that for this period his hilarity and amicability increased, though the passage was a rough one, and his berth not one of the most convenient, being exactly behind the

door ; so that when it opened, (which happened very often) either, the head of Charles received a sound knock, or the hard horse-hair pillow was suddenly withdrawn from beneath him by the lock becoming entangled in the tassels which ornamented its both ends. Still, however, his equanimity was proof against this, and various other annoyances that are usually the attendants of a sea voyage, and being one of the fortunate few to whom the dreaded evil seasickness was not familiar, Charles Lennox esteemed himself happy as he viewed the helpless beings around him, (amongst whom was Effingham) the prey of its power, to be free from its dire effects, though his eyes were not closed in sleep during the whole of the night.

It was seven o'clock in the morning when they arrived at Dover, as the weather prevented the vessel accomplishing the passage in the usual time ; and there another misfortune awaited them ; for the violence of the waves

during the night had drifted a quantity of shingles against the opening of the harbour, where heaped in one great mound they impeded the entrance of the larger ships. This was a grievance to which but one means of redress could be applied; and that consisted in hiring one of the many small boats that lay clustered on the beach, and consenting to be buffeted for the space of half an hour or more on the water, until rowed on shore by the strenuous exertions of men, whose very trade was the perilling of their lives. Yet to this method of landing, although it did not meet with the approbation of any one save himself, Charles saw no objection whatever, and instantly awaking Everard, who was asleep down stairs in the saloon, he proceeded to arrange all for their departure, which took place with incredible celerity, although their arrival on shore was not so soon effected. After some manœuvres, however, that exercised the patience of both Everard and Charles, they at last touched the

beach, and springing on the shingles, walked on to the Parade, and from thence to the Ship Hotel.

Where was the poor little Frenchwoman, meanwhile? Alas! Charles, in his haste to make his escape from the packet, had forgotten her!

CHAPTER III.

Oh ! there were looks of deeper meaning,
Than the few words that met the ear ;
Her brow upon her hand was leaning,
As if to hide the misery there.
The drooping form in prayer was kneeling
While still she clung unto his side,
Despair upon her heart was stealing
And every hope within her died.

He turn'd from her—his lips were parted
As if to speak a withering curse ;
It needed not—the look he darted
Told all the hate he strove to nurse.
Yet once again she hung upon him
Awhile in maddest agony—
Abhorringly he cast her from him,
And she was lost in misery.

It was not until late in the evening of the following day that Charles found himself sufficiently refreshed to descend to the coffee-

room ; there he met Effingham just returned from walking ; for, though Everard had been miserably ill on board the packet, he recovered the effects of the voyage sooner than Charles, who was of a delicate constitution, and naturally inclined to indolence.

“ You will regret that you were not prevailed on to join me in my morning’s ramble,” said Everard, as he advanced towards him.

“ Why so ? ” asked Charles, in a languid voice, as with that indescribable nonchalance, which so often annoyed his friend, he arose to meet him, and then sunk back in his chair as if exhausted by the movement.

“ Oh ! ” answered Everard, in a slightly derisive tone, “ if you still feel the fatigues of yesterday, I will not disturb you at present with my intelligence—you seem too tired even to listen to what I may have to tell you.”

“ Not at all, not at all, my dear Everard,” replied Charles, “ I am most ready to hear any piece of information that you will deign to

favour me with;—and by-the-bye, what time is it?”

“Eight exactly.”

“Have you dined then, Everard?”

“Yes; I ordered dinner early to-day as I wished to enjoy the sea-breeze. You know, I asked you to accompany me to the beach, but you would not, and so I had a solitary meal, and a solitary walk.”

“It will only increase the value of my company at another time, Everard—your thoughts were with me, I am sure.”

“Not until I saw a person that recalled you to my mind.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Charles, eagerly, “pray let us have tea or coffee, or whatever you will directly—I have not dined, but that is no matter.”

And taking Effingham’s arm, he walked without the slightest sign of *abattement* from the coffee-room, proceeding at a moderate pace towards the staircase, when suddenly his

footsteps became as languid as before, and a visible assumption of affectation spread itself over his whole manner. Everard, who had learnt by continual study to give a motive to all his actions, instantly looked about him, and soon perceived, at a little distance, a group of ladies and gentlemen on the landing-place; then divining at once the cause of such an exhibition of frivolity and nonsense, with a perversity of purpose that greatly discomposed both the mind and the gait of Charles, he roughly drew his arm within his own, and with desperate speed traversed the different passages that led to their private sitting-room: nor did he relinquish his hold until fairly within the middle of the apartment, and the door was firmly closed behind them. Then quietly seating himself in a large arm chair, he rang and ordered tea, while Charles continued standing in a state of bewildered thought.

“What means this?” at length he asked.

“Means?” said Everard, “it means that

I did not wish to see you make a fool of yourself. It is too ridiculous, by Heaven! one would suppose you had not an atom of sense by which you could regulate your conduct. Besides, half the sneers you excite fall on me as your companion; therefore I beg of you when you are with me to drop that exquisite air of puppyism, which, doubtless, you deem so fascinating, and assume the manners of a well-bred Englishman."

"And was that all?" answered Charles, good humouredly, "thank Heaven! it was no worse. I thought you were ill, or else, I assure you, I would not have followed you. The exquisite puppyism of my manners!—well; but I know we differ on some points of opinion upon which I shall not argue with you now, Everard, and so will deprive you of the pleasure of commencing the discussion you seem so ready to begin. My manners are refined, very refined, I allow; but they are not so ridiculous as you would have me believe; and even if they

were, I would not correct them, as I love to be distinguished from among the common herd of every day sort of persons you meet with in society, by some qualification, and I care not whether it be for taste in dress, or sense."

"Or even for being the most extravagant and affected fellow in existence!" rejoined Everard.

"Exactly so; I would rather that should be said of me, than that people should account me a quiet, docile, worthy young man. But here is the tea!—come, Everard, let us proclaim peace, and amicably conclude the evening together; you know, you will never gain me over to your hum-drum sort of ideas, so let us both at once cry truce, and have done with the subject."

"Ah! this is the way you soothe my real indignation, Charles; it is too bad, indeed it is."

"Yes, yes, I dare say," answered Lennox, as he poured out the tea, "but we will wave

all further discussion, if you please, for the present, and let me ask you, who was it you saw this morning? Yet I need not inquire—'twas the little Frenchwoman."

"It was; how came you to guess her?"

"Why, there is no one I take a particular interest in just now excepting her, therefore no one else could have recalled me to your mind, if absent from it, save that youthful enchantress. Where did you see her?"

"In Snargate-street. I had just turned from the Parade, and was proceeding towards the Castle, when I perceived her, at about ten paces before me; she was alone, not having even her servant for a companion."

"Well?"

"Well—her way seemed to lie in the same direction as mine, and thus I unavoidably followed her for some time."

"Pshaw! I should have done that, Everard, had I not been going the same road; there is nothing I like so much as giving the chase

to a pretty woman, and to see her dear little feet falling pit-a-pat, quicker and quicker, the near you approach—that is to say if she knows you are following her; which, by-the-bye, I think all women do, for they have a peculiar tact, I really believe, that tells them of it, though they may not once look back at you. But go on with your tale, Everard.”

“Where was I?—oh! now I know. At last we came to that part of the street where it suddenly narrows, and there for the first time she saw and recognised me. And now, Charles, be all attention, as something wonderful is to come.”

“Then pray proceed; this is but tantalization,” answered he.

“Well! two gentlemen whom we had not noticed were standing close to us, discoursing upon the view of the Castle as seen from where they stood; we had stopped too, Charles—yet do not be jealous; it was only caused by an act of politeness on my part; I saw that she

wished to cross the street, and therefore stepped backwards as I was in the way."

And here Everard closed his lips, and looked smilingly up into the face of his friend.

"Do you ever mean to finish, Everard?" was the impatient demand of Charles. "What next?"

"I received a very graceful bow from her," answered Effingham.

"And?" continued Charles, imploringly.

"Are you so much in love then?" provokingly rejoined Effingham, "poor, poor fellow!"

"Oh! do proceed with your adventure, Everard."

"With the greatest pleasure imaginable, Lennox; but now, tell me, are you really so interested in it?"

"Oh! you will drive me mad to-night. What of these two gentlemen?"

"Listen, and you shall hear! The gentlemen, as I said before, were talking—rather

earnestly too; and, in that quiet part of Snar-gate-street where we then were, every word could be distinctly heard. The voices near us had naturally attracted my attention as well as that of the French girl, who was close beside me; but I could see by the expression of her features, a far deeper interest than that of mere curiosity was awakened within her breast. Half fearfully she seemed to listen, till with a sudden effort she turned herself towards them, and fixed her large dark eyes strainingly upon the one whose face was bowed in a contrary direction to the spot on which we stood; and then her cheek blanched, and the blood forsook the full and pouting lip, while a half stifled shriek was suppressed. Yet though suppressed ere fully uttered, it reached the ears of the two gentlemen; both turned in surprise; but never did I see such a fearful change as passed across the countenance of the one who had wrought the emotion visible on the face of the Frenchwoman. His brow was dark with con-

ficting passions—hers, as white and as chill as the purest marble; the single word that he uttered seemed drawn from his very soul, while it thrilled to the inmost heart of the woman whom his look had thus paralyzed. That single word was Coralie.”

“Coralie!” repeated Charles, and again settled himself to listen with increasing interest.

“There was a silence for about the space of a minute,” continued Everard, “and then the gentleman swiftly advancing laid his hand upon her arm with a convulsive grasp, as he asked in a hurried tone—‘What do you here?’ It was some seconds before he received an answer; at last, however, the low and silvery voice of the young girl, tremulous from agitation replied, in the accents that sound so strangely sweet to an English ear, ‘I sought thee!’ ‘Had we not parted and for ever?’ was the next question demanded, when suddenly, seeming to recollect himself, he relinquished his hold, and walking

hastily away, was quickly followed by his friend."

"And Coralie?"

"She stood for some minutes lost to everything around her, while I watched the large tears roll slowly down her pallid cheeks; and believe me, Charles, although it was the first time I had felt an interest in her, it was sincere and deep. But I could only pity her; she was not one to whom my services could be offered, or if offered prove of any avail. I stayed, however, until she recovered herself sufficiently to proceed at a slow pace down Snargate-street, and then returned to the Hotel. And there is the end of my tale."

"An extraordinary one," said Charles, musingly, "who can she be? and who was the gentleman? and who——"

"And who are the hundreds of persons that daily excite our curiosity, yet are never known?" interrupted Everard. "Your conjectures as to the truth will be useless, Charles, so you had

best let them drop; for it is most likely we shall never know more than we do at present. I do not like to wonder long upon any subject."

"There! that is always the way with you," said Charles; "you never will talk for any time upon the same theme. Now I like to fathom all things, and if I cannot do that, why, I love to build a gorgeous fabric of my own, though it be without the slightest foundation."

"An excellent method of idling your time, but not one I should like to adopt. However, I promise you, Charles, when I am married to spend an hour or two every day with you in that imaginative amusement; for then I shall have to create my own happiness, though false and fleeting it may be!"

"That is another reflection upon poor Ada Harolde. You are very detestable, Everard; I have never once heard you speak well of a woman during the whole course of my intimacy with you."

"I shall not attempt to refute you, Charles, I have not the time; I am going to write to my future father-in-law, so you must excuse me, and solace yourself with a book as a companion."

I shall do no such thing, I assure you; since you are such an egotist, I will be one too. Come, own now, it is with pleasure that you refuse me the charms of your conversation; you may as well. As for me, I confess that I wish to be alone; your tale has engendered thoughts that the calm moonlight scene without alone may soothe—I am going to the beach, Everard."

"To the beach! what would you do there? It is bitterly cold, I warn you; you will only catch a return of the sore-throat you had some time ago,"

"My resolution is fixed; I will go."

"Very well—go!" said Everard; and Charles instantly sallied forth.

It was as Effingham said, a very cold, but

nevertheless, a very beautiful night. The moon shone high in the bright blue sky, and all was still, save when a gust of wind came fushing along the shore, and lashed the quiet waves into a momentary fury, then moaningly died away to silence. Every object on the sea and on the land could be distinctly seen, for the air was clear, and no mist veiled the broad bosom of the waters, as reflecting the soft radiance of the starry lights of heaven on its surface, it swelled into one large sheet of silvery effulgence. Faintly in the distance the chalky line that bespoke the coast of France could be distinguished binding the blue sea within its bed ; while the straight masts of some fair vessel ploughing the depths glittered brightly in the beams of the pale moon, that lit both the heavens and the earth with her glory, and glassed her full image on the deep beneath. Then, when the eye, after roving over the beautiful and solemn scene, again sought the shores of merry England, and gazed upon the

silent town, no more re-echoing to the tread of feet, but sunk in quietude and sleep, save where the floating sounds of music, proceeding from a band stationed at the southern end of the parade, were borne wildly aloft upon the fitful breeze, the stern, dark castle, with its keep, rose majestically from the huge white cliffs, and frowned upon the view beneath, speaking of long past times, and awakening strange thoughts within the muser's mind; a rest of the mightiness of bygone days that must call upon the dead to speak, if it would reveal the now forgotten tales of its power and its strength. The proud and the powerful of ages past, the hearts that struggled with the fiercest passions would then arise from the dust where so long they had rested undisturbed, to tell of the hours they had lived upon earth—so short—so quickly fled!—to weep over their names and their glories that have faded away from the land where they were once familiar to the lips of all, though the works of

their hands yet rest as dim shadows of the past, and speak of scenes now shrouded, and for ever, from the children of the soil, who would but vainly seek to fathom the dark vapours that surround them.

And Charles thought of these things as he paced the loose shingles on the beach; for though he externally seemed swayed but by the impulse of the moment, the slave of pleasure and caprice, still there were deep and generous feelings in the heart that many would have deemed a worthless one. He listened to the distant music which filled his heart with fond emotion, and he thought of the mother whose features he yet dimly recollected; of the deep, deep love he had seen lavished upon those whose parents still lived to bless them with their presence; and then came a lonely and a chilling feeling—whose thoughts at that moment were turned with eager solicitude upon him!—whose bosom thrilled with the hope of seeing him! And the questions he had

asked were answered in the stillness around him: the calm and dead silence whispered—
“None!”

But it was not truth, Charles; for soon a voice within thine heart bade thee remember the old aunt that had so fondly, although so foolishly, watched over thine infancy: and if that reproached thee, still was there comfort in the sound, and more cheerfully did thine eyes seek the soft light of the moon, while thoughts of home, and of love, came thronging to thy brow as thou dwelt upon the blessing, tremulous from joy, that would greet thee, when thy steps would turn unto thy childhood's scenes of peace and pleasure.

It was some time before the quick strides of Charles Lennox, upon the shore, relapsed into the slower steps of the muser whose mind is employed in soothing meditation; for the above thoughts had produced a feeling akin to irritation in his mind, and his feet moved over the rough stones, as if to spurn them from his way.

But as the gentler influence prevailed, his pace relaxed in its speed, and drawing his cloak closer about him, he trod them with the slackening steps of one whose feelings were slowly passing in array before him, till at last wearied with the monotony of the exercise, he sat down upon some old boats that had been thrown upon the beach, and abandoned himself to the refreshing influence of the sea-breeze.

For some minutes he continued in solitude and silence; but ere long he fancied he heard the steps of some persons approaching the spot where he sat; and turning to where the sounds proceeded from, plainly distinguished the forms of a man and a woman. As they came nearer he could see that they were in earnest altercation, and the man with a gesture of impatience seemed to motion the female away, while she clung to his arm beseechingly; and her face being at that moment turned towards him, he perceived that her features were those of the youthful traveller who had so

deeply interested him. Again her companion tried to disengage himself from her grasp; and as they were now advancing swiftly towards Charles, he could discern every trace of feeling that marked the brow of each. The gentleman (for though muffled up, his appearance denoted him to be one), had succeeded in forcing the young French girl to release her hold, yet they still walked on side by side, but slightly apart, as if there were a space between them which she dared not encroach on. Her hands were clasped in supplication, and her head was bowed upon them, while the lips moved in quick utterance, though the sense of what she said did not reach his ear, till these words came ringing on the breeze: and so wildly and despairingly were they spoken, that every accent sounded piercingly distinct.

“ You will not leave me here alone—alone on a foreign shore?—Is everything forgotten but that parting hour?—Oh! will no word, no action of mine convince you of my truth?”

"None!" was the cold, stern answer, as with a look of the deepest abhorrence the stranger turned from the half-kneeling form beside him—"None! I will appoint some person to re-conduct you to the home you have left."

"I have no home, no home but where yours is! Alas! alas! and should it not be so?"

"Call not my home yours," answered the gentleman, in a voice of concentrated emotion; "we never meet again! Nay, take thine hand away, woman," he continued: for in the energy of her last appeal, she had laid her hand upon his cloak, and still sought to retain it within her grasp—"thy touch is contamination!"

As he spoke he pushed her from him; and walking swiftly from the spot, turned down one of the neighbouring streets, and was soon out of sight.

Coralie stood in the place where he had left her, rigid and motionless, for some minutes;

then staggering on a few steps, before Charles could reach her, sank lifeless to the ground.

For one moment as he raised her in his arms, and bore her to his former seat among the boats, he gazed in silence upon the beautiful but pallid features that had so lately been convulsed in the agony of despair; and though he understood from the conversation he had overheard that some crime was imputed to her which could not be forgiven, yet, as he dwelt upon the sweet and guileless expression of her face, he felt he could have sworn to her truth and innocence, and told the accuser she had been wronged—deeply wronged. He laid her gently within the boat; and disembarassing himself of his cloak, wrapped it well around her; then hastily departed in quest of assistance.

He had not far to walk; in three or four minutes he reached the line of houses that are built on the Parade, and knocking at the first door he perceived, was answered by an old

and respectable-looking woman, who after some few words, comprehended his errand, and instantly set off with him to render all the help in her power. As Charles watched the slow and measured paces of his companion, as they proceeded on their way to the beach, most heartily did he wish for the assistance of one less aged and infirm; but, knowing he could not choose his associate in his work of humanity, he contented himself as well as he could on the necessity of the case, and constrained his impatient steps to the feeble ones of the old lady.

But even had she crawled along the shingles, no great time could have elapsed ere they reached their destination, for the distance was short, and though, in the present case, Charles' impetuosity exaggerated the slowness with which they traversed that space, it was accomplished in less than ten minutes.

They found Coralie still insensible, and the old woman as she bent over her, and muttered

something about the severeness of the weather, asked Charles whether he could transport her to the house from whence they came: "For," said she, "it is bitter cold, and this is a long fainting fit,—perhaps, indeed, the fresh air may do her good; but then I think she has had enough of that by this time, don't you, sir? Poor thing! I wonder such a young and delicate creature could venture out alone—however, to be sure, girls will do foolish actions now and then. That's right," she continued, as she saw Charles lift Coralie in his arms, and bear her towards the house, "that's right! I would help you, sir, but I cannot; for my arms are stiff with the rheumatism." And hobbling on before him, she led the way back, unlatched the door, and showed her unexpected guests into a comfortable little parlour, where a large and brightly blazing fire, illumined the whole room.

"There, lay her on the sofa, sir," said the old lady, as soon as she was within doors, "lay

her on the sofa—and, Anne, Anne, where are you?—fetch me my salts—and bring some cold water, too,—do you hear?”

Then approaching Coralie, she began to tap her small and soft white hand, uttering, meanwhile, various ejaculations about her beauty and the fineness of her garments; expressing her surprise at the circumstance that had brought them together, until Charles, who had only stated that he had found her insensible on the beach, almost wished he had proclaimed himself the friend of the lady, and thus protected both himself and her from the endless enquiries which he knew would be continually addressed to him. But though the curiosity of their hostess seemed stretched to its utmost point, her humanity taught her silence when the young girl began to revive; and with earnest solicitude she watched every symptom of returning life which began to re-animate the beautiful form that lay extended before her. At length her incessant care was requited;

Coralie raised herself upon the pillows that supported her, and gazing round the apartment in a state of half unconsciousness, murmured, "Il est parti,—pour jamais!—et il ne veut pas m'entendre!" But soon her senses fully returning, she lifted her eyes to the face of Charles, while a sudden expression of terror passed across her countenance, and hastily rising she said in a voice that denoted extreme wonder, "Where, where am I?—and what has happened?" then recollecting herself, "ah, yes!" she cried, "I know all now!" And deeply blushing she stood for some time in silence while the tears fast gathered in her downcast eyes. Charles approached, and gave her the same explanation, as he had before given the old woman; for he did not wish to increase her uneasiness by mentioning that he had seen her otherwise than alone. She thanked him, and seemed lost in thought; for not being perfectly recovered she could not immediately collect her scattered ideas; then

turning to Mrs. Parker who had by this time informed her of her name and occupation, (she was the mistress of the lodging-house in which they were) she repeatedly expressed her gratitude for the services she had rendered her, and after waiting a few moments longer, during which she seemed with effort to collect her returning strength, she rose to depart. But this was not permitted; Mrs. Parker used all her endeavours to detain her, observing she was yet very weak; and Charles also advised her to remain where she was for at least a quarter of an hour, urging that she was yet incapable of walking home, even if the distance were short, at the same time expressing a wish that she would permit him to conduct her there, as it was so late in the evening, and in case of another attack of illness; for he pretended not to know the cause of her late indisposition. This, however, she absolutely refused.

"I am well, quite well now," said she, "I know not what came over me,—perhaps it was

the exercise to which I am unaccustomed ; but I am perfectly recovered—and after again thanking this kind lady for her care, I will depart ; the walk is nothing to me, I am used to it.”

At this contradiction in her words, Charles Lennox looked up and smiled ; but, seeing that she perceived her mistake, and knew not how to rectify it, he repeated his request of being allowed to accompany her home.

“No, no,” was her answer, more hurriedly given than before ; “indeed, I cannot—do not, do not—” she could proceed no farther for her voice was choked with emotion.

“Then,” said Charles, worked up into a fit of desperation by her refusal, for he could not bear to think upon the probability of her returning alone, as ill and as wretched as she appeared, “then, perhaps, this lady will accompany you,—or, or allow her servant to do so.”

“Oh! ah! poor thing!” answered Mrs.

Parker, "directly, to be sure, I will. Anne, put your bonnet and shawl on—yes, yes, my dear, she shall go with you."

"Thank you, madame," said Coralie, evidently relieved, "I will accept your offer, if it does not occasion you too much trouble."

"None at all, none at all. Anne, where are you?" And officiously wrapping all the cloaks and shawls she could find about her, Mrs. Parker proceeded to recommend Coralie to the care of a great country girl who now entered, and who proved to be the promised escort.

"I believe," said the French lady, as her hostess continued to load her with all the articles she could lay her hands upon, while Charles was composedly looking on, "I believe these shawls are not mine."

"Oh! never mind—Anne can bring them back after she has seen you home," replied Mrs. Parker.

"But this belongs to that gentleman," again urged Coralie, as she unwound a great horse-

man's cloak from around her slender figure. "I could not think of wearing it."

"Oh dear!" interrupted her innocent tormentor "the gentleman will lend it to you for to-night, I dare say—won't you, sir? Anne can bring it back, you know. Pray, sir, where do you live?—you will lend it, sir?"

"With the greatest pleasure," answered Charles, gravely, though he felt a scarcely resistible desire to laugh.

"I am very much obliged to you and to this gentleman," replied Coralie who seemed a little embarrassed, "but madame, I must decline your proffered kindnesses; therefore let me return these shawls and this cloak, if you please? And she handed the latter article she had mentioned to Charles, who bowed, and took it, as he saw she wished to be safely rid of the cumbrous covering; then again repeating her adieus, she passed her arm through that of the servant who was waiting for her, and departed.

Charles, with a very laudable resolution, which few who knew him but superficially would have given him credit for, suffered at least five minutes to elapse ere he arose to go; for he wished to prove to the young Frenchwoman, though he might never see her again, that it was not from idle curiosity or gallantry he had wished to escort her home, but from motives of pure humanity.

"I wish she had taken your cloak, sir," said the old lady, as he bade her good-bye, "Anne could have brought it back, you know."

"I wish she had," answered Charles, and he walked from the house.

Many were the thoughts that presented themselves to his mind relative to the situation of Coralie; but not one on which he could dwell with satisfaction. Not that Charles Lennox, speaking seriously, was in love, or even on the point of being in love with the young girl whose image had occupied so much of his thoughts and feelings within the last few

hours—far from it. He had been and was still as deeply interested in the fate of Ada Harolde as in that of Coralie; perhaps more so; for knowing as much of her history as Everard did himself, having questioned him on all the particulars, which in his opinion were far from being disadvantageous to her, his admiration was composed of respect and esteem; while Coralie, later known, was shrouded in an impenetrable veil of mystery, and though pity was the predominant feeling he bore towards her, still he could not reflect upon the words he had heard addressed to her without some shades of doubt creeping athwart his mind. Yet again, the sweet expression of her face, the imploring glances of those bright black eyes, the flash of indignation that for a moment lightened within them, when she asked her accuser whether nothing would convince him of her truth, and the total suspension of consciousness as he left her, spoke powerfully in her favour; and Charles, confused by the different feelings that swayed him, was going to give up

the subject of his meditations as a hopeless source of enquiry, when, all at once, he found that he had ascended the staircase of the Hotel, and that his hand was on the lock of the room where he had left Everard early in the evening. The instant the door opened he was greeted by an exclamation of surprise from Effingham.

“ Why, where have you been, Charles ?” he cried. “ It is long past one o'clock—what can you have been doing all this time ? not walking, I am sure ; that would have knocked you up long before this. Listen, I have despatched no less than half a dozen letters ; read a new novel quite through ; and besides that, have had a comfortable dream in yonder arm chair about escaping the noose which I so dread. Again I repeat, where, where have you been ?”

Charles Lennox explained, everything relating to his adventure, commented on it with some length, wished Everard good night, and then walked upstairs to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

There is no time to waste : let's on....
The marriage bells have stay'd too long :
Although they will ring for the coldest heart
That ever hath acted a lover's part !

THE next morning Charles Lennox rose early ; and breakfasting alone, walked out, proceeding straight to the house where Mrs. Parker lived, which he had particularly noticed on the preceding night ; and where his knock being instantly answered, he was shown into the neat little parlour, and found himself in the presence of the old lady. After apologizing for calling at so unseasonable an hour, making an

enquiry about her health, and ascertaining whether she had partially recovered the fatigues of the night, he asked if the French lady had arrived home safely!

"Oh, dear! yes, sir," Mrs. Parker replied; "but I have such an odd thing to tell you—I am glad to see you—it was the very thing I wished for."

"Why, madam?"

"To ask your advice, sir; for as we are the only two persons who know anything about what happened last night, I think it best to have your opinion upon something I mean to tell you."

"Oh," said Charles—"what is it?"

"Why, sir, after you had left yester evening, as I was arranging this room before I went to bed, which is always my way, sir, you must know, I saw something glittering upon the floor, and picking it up, I found it was the picture of a gentleman—and of a very handsome gentleman, too. Now, I knew very

well, I had no such thing there in the morning, as I sweep this room myself, because the maid has a great deal to do elsewhere, and it's a pity to put too much work on her shoulders, sir. Well, I directly thought it belonged to the young foreign lady, so this morning, knowing how people at this time come and go, at eight o'clock, I sent Anne with it to the house where she lodged last night; but I might just as well have let it alone, for the lady had started for London an hour before she arrived, so she brought it back to me—and what am I to do with it, sir?"

As she put this query to Charles, she placed in his hand a small miniature, and upon examining the painting, he instantly recognized the features of the gentleman he had seen with Coralie on the beach.

"I am pretty certain it belonged to the French lady," continued Mrs. Parker, "because if you look to the back of the portrait

you will see a very strange name written there—look sir!”

Charles did as he was desired, and distinguished the name of Coralie de Villeblanche written in a bold running-hand; there were also some words, which he could not decipher, traced in a smaller and more elegant one.

“ Well, sir, what do you think of it?” said Mrs. Parker.

“ That it must, as you have said, belong to the French lady,” answered Charles.

“ But what is to be done with it?—How can I return it?” again rejoined the old woman. “ It is not a very valuable ornament, to be sure, for it is very plainly set; but, poor thing! I dare say she grieves very much for the loss of it. Perhaps he was some sweetheart, or brother; and truly he is a very handsome young man—don’t you think so, sir?”

“ Yes,” replied Charles; and though he said it partly to quiet the loquacity of Mrs.

Parker, he thought so nevertheless. But she continued—

“Look at those dark brown curls, and the hazel eyes; and that sweet, sweet smile about the lips, sir! I don't think I ever saw a handsomer gentleman. Ah! if I were a young girl, I should like such a sweetheart as that.”

Charles laughed.

“Ah! you may laugh,—but many a high lady, I'll be bound, would be glad to have him, too. And now, sir, I want to ask you a question—are you going to London, sir?”

Charles looked rather astonished at her abruptness, yet answered—

“Not direct from Dover; but in a week or two I shall be there.”

“That's just it!” said Mrs. Parker; “then you had better keep the picture, and try to return it to the lady. As for me, it is not likely I shall ever see her again; but you, sir, may, as you are going to London, therefore

I will give it to you, and when you meet her you can return it."

"But I may never meet her," said Charles; "many persons purposely seek each other in London, yet never meet."

"Still it is better you should have it than I," replied the old woman, obstinately; "I do not like to keep such things."

"Well," said Charles, "if you will have it so, I'll take it: and," continued he, laughing, "it will not be a very heavy weight on my mind even should I lose it, for it is no precious gem save to her who lost it."

"Ah, poor thing!" ejaculated Mrs. Parker; "I wonder who she can be!"

After satisfying his curiosity by a few more enquiries, Charles took his leave, and turned his steps towards the hotel, where he found Effingham just walking out to seek him.

"Did you not know we were to start at one?" said Everard, as he perceived him.

"Yes," answered Charles; "yet see, I am

in time, am I not?" And he drew forth his watch; it was wanting a quarter of the hour appointed. "I have but just escaped a lecture," he added, smiling.

"True," replied Effingham; "you generally have hair-breadth escapes. But come, the post-chaise is waiting, Charles, and the sooner we set off the better, else I shall not reach the Hall before night, which will be very disagreeable for me, as it will disturb the family. I wish," he continued, impatiently, "I wish I had refused Mr. Harolde's invitation to make his house my home while I stayed in Kent; I shall not much relish the sudden change from perfect freedom to the silken bondage of a lady's boudoir; but, as it is, so it must be; when Mr. Harolde presses any request, you cannot refuse—he is such a good-natured old man! Besides, I felt I was wrong in delaying the marriage at all, so I was obliged to accept it to excuse my tardiness. Come, Charles, I am ready."

"Wait one moment, Effingham," said Charles; "did you countermand the orders you gave last night to proceed to Walmer first? If you have not, I must; for you know I am fully determined to journey with you to Harolde Hall, to catch a glimpse of the venerable walls that enshrine your destined wife, before I greet aunt Lennox."

"Then allow me to tell you, Charles, you will render yourself perfectly ridiculous. It is full thirty miles out of your way—and what pleasure can you find in viewing the Hall from the village, or hill, or any other place your fancy has hit upon? It is not such a very beautiful part of the country, I assure you."

"Nonsense! its every hillock and tree I have pictured in my mind endued with all the charms of romance; the names of Ada Harolde and Everard Effingham have cast a spell upon its scenes that never can be broken. I must go—I will go. I can stop at the village inn, if there be one, or if not at one of the cottages

near the park. Do not be afraid, however, Effingham, that I shall trouble you with my presence—no, no, I would not intrude upon your retirement, or laugh at the chains that are forming for you; unseen I will lurk in the vicinity of the park; and if by chance I view for one moment the form of the lovely Ada, I shall think myself well repaid for my trouble. I will go, Effingham.”

Effingham was displeased; but he said no more. He knew indeed all remonstrance would prove useless; and Charles went to see if the orders had been properly understood; and about two o'clock they were on the road for Harolde Hall.

CHAPTER V.

A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her:—
For scorn at first makes after love the more ;
If she do frown 'tis not in hate of you ;
But rather to beget more love in you.
If she do chide 'tis not to have you gone.

Two Gent. of Verona.

HAROLD'S HALL was situated on the sea coast about twenty miles south of Dover. Its park, though not very extensive, was well wooded, and the country that environed it was hilly and picturesque. The grounds extended to the very edge of the long range of tall white cliffs that rose along the shore, and the house was built

so as to command a view of the sea and of the surrounding country, excepting where a large mass of trees on the north side, shut out the distant horizon from sight, and shed a not unpleasing gloom over the beautiful green slope on which it stood. Its style of architecture was heavy and old fashioned, for it had been built about a century back, when the ancient residence of the family was found no longer tenantable, and of which the ruins still remained at the distance of a mile from the new building. But it had lately undergone various alterations, which, perhaps, had been deemed improvements by the possessor; the windows, lengthened and modernized on the eastern side, were made to open upon a flight of stone steps, that led down to a beautiful lawn facing the sea, and which relieved, in some degree, the dark aspect of the old pile, though incongruous with the building itself. In the summer the Hall was a delightful residence, for its situation and grounds were very beautiful; and in the

winter there was an air of comfort and hospitality about the good substantial walls, that seemed to defy the strong winds that whirled around the cliffs, which few would have exchanged for a more elegant but less sure shelter from their fury, and which amply repaid the proprietor for the fleeting charms of the summer.

It was sunset when Effingham and Charles arrived at the little village of N—— from which the Hall was about two miles distant; and there, as the evening was beautiful, they got out of the post-chaise, and proceeded on foot, intending to accomplish the rest of the road as pedestrians, Effingham agreeing to be the guide.

“Now, Charles, had you not better return?” said Everard after they had walked a little way from the inn. Recollect you will have to go back by yourself, and you will surely miss your road, as it is a very intricate one.”

“How did I find my way through the forest

of Soigné, the Welch mountains, the bogs of Ireland, and a hundred other places where I have been separated from you, and alone?" answered his friend.

Everard shrugged his shoulders and was silent, while Charles continued triumphantly.

"You talk to me as if I were yet in the leading strings of aunt Lennox; for even should I lose myself Everard, amidst these beautiful shady lanes that surround us on all sides, I should not much care about that, for I should consider the pleasure I experience now, as far outweighing such a contretemps."

"What pleasure can you experience now?"

"Oh! a very recreative one, I assure you; when you spoke I was just imagining what your first greeting to Ada Harolde would be."

"That you could fancy, I should imagine at the inn."

"Not at all. Here, here, in the scenes of thy childhood, Everard Effingham, I must picture thine happiness; no where else will do."

"I should like to see you in love, Charles,"

said Everard, smiling, "you would be an enthusiast, I think; that is to say, if you were really and truly so, which, however, I fancy will never happen.

"And why not? Have you not seen me in love a hundred times, Everard? Was I not in love with 'Ada Harolde for the first month after you told me of your engagement with her?—and that you might have seen. Then there were the little Countesse de Montrevel, and Mademoiselle de Beauchamp; the beautiful Italian girl at Florence, the Sœur de Charité at Brussels, the nun at Dieppe, the Welch girl, Margaret Morgans at Gower, the exquisite actress of the Odeon, the pretty little pensionaire of the Boulevard des Italiens; and many, many more with whom I have been desperately in love."

"No doubt, no doubt; but that is not what I mean."

"Then, what do you mean?"

"A deep and generous feeling for the woman who has won your heart, and whom you feel

deserves it; free from selfishness or vanity; constant and imperishable unto death. This is what I call love."

"And I too," said Charles, "but I am an unfortunate fellow, and shall never experience it—I know I never shall—so I must be content to love as I can love; and the woman whom I choose for my wife—must be content with that too."

They had now reached a woody part of the road, where it branched off in four different directions, and Everard stopping, seemed undecided which way to proceed.

"There seems to be many alterations here," said he, "I remember but one road, and now there are four."

"It is at least five years since you were in this part of the country," replied Charles, "great changes take place in a shorter time; but pray collect your wandering ideas; it will not be so pleasant to remain here till night-fall."

"I know that the old path inclined towards the left; now there are three in the same direction," said Everard, "It is really very embarrassing, for if we happen to take the wrong one we shall be led, perhaps, on to the sands, or at least completely out of our way. I think we had better go back to the inn and enquire about it."

"Oh no, for Heaven's sake, no," cried Charles, "let us proceed and take our chance; perhaps we shall meet some one who may direct us thither."

"Yes, and so continue walking all night in the vain hope of finding Harolde Hall; that would be a very sensible measure, indeed!"

"Oh! it would be absolutely dreadful to retrace our steps; we have walked three miles already, I am sure."

"Three miles! not a mile and a half yet."

"Do not say so, for I am quite fatigued, and can go no further."

"Was I not right then," rejoined Everard,

"when I said you had better have remained at the inn?"

"No!" said Charles suddenly recollecting himself, "no! I would walk three times the ground to accomplish my present purpose; besides, I feel a presentiment that something agreeable will happen en route."

"Then I have nothing more to urge," said Everard, though I think after all we must return to the inn, for my memory is completely at fault."

"Nonsense! nonsense!" exclaimed Charles. "Is any one near of whom I could enquire? Yes!—what is that figure on the bank yonder, Everard?"

"A woman," said Effingham.

"All the better!" rejoined Charles, "women in general are far more civil than men. I will question her and be with you again in a moment."

And he sped across the road, and up the bank, walking quickly towards the person he

had pointed out to Everard. As he approached her, however, his pace slackened, and his eyes rested with astonishment and curiosity upon the figure before him.

It was that of a young lady who had seemingly just dismounted from a beautiful black horse, that stood quietly grazing beside her, while she was employed in wreathing some roses that lay in a small wicker basket not far from the spot where she was standing. She had already finished one garland, and had bound it round the arched and glossy neck of her courser, whose long mane, plaited carefully, was also decorated with flowers; but the wreath she was then forming seemed intended to ornament her own dark and luxuriant hair; for while she twined the roses together, each moment she placed it on her head, as if to fit it to the beautiful brow it was destined to bind. Her stature was much below the middle size, yet perfectly symmetrical; of which the outlines were distinguished though clothed in fur, for the sable

jacket, though covering a riding habit of dark blue cloth, fitted tightly to the shape, and allowed its exquisite proportions to be seen. A plumed cap of purple velvet lay near her on the grass, which had been cast aside, and her hair, escaping from its confinement, fell in a shower of jetty ringlets that descended far below the small and delicate waist. Her eyes were black and lustrous, yet her complexion was fair, and tinged with a lovely bloom upon the cheek; while the little rosy mouth, beautifully formed, ever and anon curved itself into a playful smile, which same smile showed to the very best advantage a row of small and finely cut teeth of pearly whiteness. She was unconscious of the approach of Charles Lennox until he was quite close to her; and then, so deeply interested was she in her employment, that he repeated his question and apology, for troubling her with it, twice ere she seemed to hear him, and even when she understood what he said, she did not immediately reply, but raising her hand

motioned him to silence, as she fixed the coronet upon her brow, then looking up, slightly started as she perceived him.

He repeated his enquiry.

“The road to Harolde Hall lies in that direction,” said she, pointing to the middle road, “but if you are a stranger in these parts you must be careful to keep to the left, for you have to pass through a small wood, and there the path again diverges in several directions.”

“I am a stranger here, madam,” answered Charles, who felt disposed to lengthen the colloquy, “and I should not have ventured thus far without proper information upon the subject on which I have ventured to address you, if a friend, who accompanies me, and whose youth was past chiefly in this neighbourhood, had not assured me that he was perfectly competent to undertake the office of a guide; but having been absent on the continent for these five years, and the aspect of the country hereabouts being much changed, perhaps, he

may be excused on that score for failing, as he has done, in the attempt."

"Five years absent on the Continent! Harolde Hall!" exclaimed the lady, to the very great astonishment of Charles, who saw nothing in the information to occasion her surprise. "Five years absent on the Continent!—exactly so!"

Charles stared, while the young lady recovering her previous composure of manner, bowed slightly, and moved away. This brought him to the necessity of detaining her for a moment longer, for he had quite forgotten the directions she had given him. When he repeated his demand, she clapped her hands together, and a black servant on horseback, whom he had not noticed, galloped up the bank from behind a little slope that had partly hidden him from view.

"Julian," said she, as he dismounted and stood before her, "show this gentleman the way to the Hall; I do not require your attendance."

And springing upon her horse, ere Charles could offer a word of acknowledgment for this extraordinary piece of complaisance, and giving the reins to her steed, she was soon lost to his sight in the distant scenery. He watched her retreating form till it was completely shut out from his view, then turning to the black servant desired him to follow, and walking hastily from the bank, soon rejoined Everard, who had been impatiently awaiting his return.

"Did you see her?" asked Charles.

"See who?" said Effingham.

"The lady," replied Charles.

"I saw something white mounted on a black horse flit across the road just now; but I could not distinguish what it was. Who is this man?"

"The lady's servant whom she ordered to conduct us to the Hall."

"Extraordinary!" muttered Everard, "how came you to accomplish that?"

"How! I cannot tell myself! I only ques-

tioned her as to the road, and mentioned that you had been mistaken in your powers of recollection; which mistake I surmised arose from your having been five years on the Continent, and only just returned. 'Five years on the Continent!' repeated she, as if struck with astonishment, 'Five years on the Continent! Harolde Hall!' I stood wondering as you may suppose, till she called me to a sense of politeness by bowing, and moving off. Meanwhile I had forgotten the directions she had previously given me, and questioned her again on the subject; when she, suddenly clapping her hands, called this gentleman upon the scene, and ordered him to guide us to the Hall. That is all, Everard."

"And that is enough; enough to set your brain on fire with conjecture, and bid all the visions of Ada and Harolde Hall to evacuate it; your dreams both by night and by day will be now founded upon this new enchantress. Was she pretty?"

Everard asked this question merely to support his former assertion of not having distinguished her features, which was false, as the countenance of the young lady as she passed up the lane had been turned towards him, and therefore he had had a full opportunity of satisfying his curiosity on this point. But be it remembered, Everard was not then in one of the best of tempers.

"Beautiful! beautiful!" replied Charles earnestly, as he motioned their mysterious guide onwards, who led them down the same road by which his mistress had disappeared, and thus furnishing a new subject for conjecture to Charles.

"I wonder where she lives!" said he.

"What a question!"

"I see no houses hereabouts, Everard."

"I believe you; I see nothing but tall, dark, and leafless trees on each side of us, while to the front a huge white cliff overshadows our path."

present moment, but his reply, while it completely reassured, amused and puzzled her.

"Thank Heaven!" said he, somewhat abruptly. "I thought all girls played and sang now a days, at least I never met with one before who could not get through some brilliant sonata, or battle piece an hour long and only fit to send one to sleep. But you sing, perhaps?"

"When I am at home; but I should not like to attempt it before all these people."

"I understand you," said Raymond Berrington: "you play and sing only to please your father, and those whom you love; not for the purpose of luring an idle crowd, and exhibiting your rings!"

Catherine looked timidly into his face as he spoke, and there was an expression of bitter scorn upon it, which disappeared as he met her gentle glance, while a deep flush passed over his brow. It was so new to him to see eyes lifted to his almost with reverence, certainly with

attention, and feel that to one person at least he was an object neither of neglect or ridicule, that the emotions it excited were both dangerous and delightful.

"Are you fond of the country?" asked Raymond, after a pause—"or do you prefer London?"

"Oh, the country, decidedly!"

"So do I—I never feel quite at my ease in town; but here one may wander away for miles and never meet a soul, or lie under the quiet trees, as I have done thousands of times by the hour together, thinking of nothing."

"Oh, yes," said Catherine, "and gather flowers—and watch the bright sunsets. But surely you would not be quite alone, Mr. Berrington?" she added, simply.

"To-night, for the first time," replied he, "I have thought it possible that a companion might add to the happiness of my solitary rambles. But do not call me Mr. Berrington, as if we were strangers."

"And are we not?" asked Catherine, colouring slightly.

"According to the laws of modern society we may be so, having met this morning for the first time; but I feel as if you were already more to me than all those with whom I have been associating for weeks past."

"I am sure," said Catherine, "I ought to be very grateful to you for having helped me to pass so pleasantly through a day to which I had looked forward with dread, and leaving your friends and companions to devote so much attention to a poor, neglected girl like myself."

"I have no friends," said Raymond, abruptly—"no companions; this is the first happy evening that I have spent here! But not the last; promise me, Miss Walsingham, that you will not withdraw your sweet trust, but let me be your friend and confidant during your stay. To look to me as you have done for the last few hours for everything you want,

and suffer no one else to wait upon or love you!"

Half bewildered by the earnestness of his manner, Catherine could only place her hand in his, with a deep blush, and say how safe she should feel under his protection, and with him always at her side to advise and support her.

"And now," exclaimed he, exultingly, "you must never say Mr. Berrington again, but always Raymond. And I—what must I call you?—Still Miss Walsingham?"

"My name is Catherine," replied his companion, with downcast eyes; and from that moment there was no ceremony between them.

For the first time in his life Raymond Berrington shewed himself insensible to the railery of Herbert and his companions on his evident devotion to the young stranger; the recollection of Catherine's gentleness and trust acting as a counter charm to all their ridicule, and rendering him for once firm and

immoveable. But when after a few days a faint colour stole into the delicate cheek of his favourite, and a brighter lustre to her dark, speaking eyes—when his brother pronounced her to be “a splendid creature!” and Philip Lindsay sought in vain to win her from the side of her first friend, then came a proud hour of triumph to Raymond, which made him more than ever admire the fair cause of it.

It is a question whether he really knew the colour of Kate's eyes, often as they met his, until many weeks after their first acquaintance, and certain it is their rare beauty had no share in winning his heart, but might have beamed on him in their brightness for ever unnoticed. He was not proof however against the simplicity with which they were raised to his on every occasion, either asking for advice or soliciting approbation. And this was the homage of a young and pure spirit given freely to one who never before met with either respect or attention, and was painfully conscious how

little of wealth or talents he had to command them.

After all there was no mystery in the deep hold which he soon gained over the affectionate reverence of Catherine Walsingham. She had begun by being grateful for kindness proffered at the very moment when she needed it most. Then there was something fascinating in the idea of being thus singled out by him from among many fairer and happier beings, and made the confidant of all the secret scorn, and deep-hoarded tenderness of a lonely heart. Perhaps she loved him even better as she began to see how necessary that love became to him, and how it was to compensate for the coldness and neglect of others. "Anything like mystery," writes a modern authoress of deserved celebrity, "anything withheld, or withdrawn from our notice, seizes on the fancy by awakening our curiosity. Then we are won more by what we half perceive and half create, than by what is openly expressed."

It is a dangerous feeling when we begin to

imagine that we alone of all the world can understand and appreciate another, when we set at nought all warnings, and see only with the blinded eyes of passion, and one which brings with it its own punishment, although often not until it is too late! Catherine had often held long and delightful arguments with Walter and her father on any subject which might happen to fall under dispute; but now she gave up at once even when she knew herself to be right, rather than find out that he whom she had enshrined as the idol of her young heart could do or say anything that might deteriorate from the perfection with which she had gifted him, and wilfully deceived herself rather than discover how wildly she had permitted her imagination to deceive her.

From the first day of Catherine's arrival, Raymond Berrington appeared to have completely changed his whole nature; his step acquired new firmness, and the natural haughtiness of his spirit veiled the nervousness which sent the rich blood in fitful flushings to his

white cheek upon every occasion. He even mingled now and then in their discourse, which was seldom very profound, and concealing the anguish which their sly taunts and covert sneers gave rise to, repaid them with a cold, withering satire that struck deeper than the mere surface, converting many who had assailed him but in sportive malice, into the bitter and implacable enemies of after life.

"How I should like to receive such a letter from any one whom I loved," said Catherine, looking playfully up from her work, as he turned over the third sheet of paper closely written, and prepared to commence a fresh page.

Raymond smiled.

"I am writing to my mother," said he; "she made me promise to tell her everything that happened to me while here."

Catherine sighed deeply, and was for some moments utterly unconscious of the earnest gaze of her companion.

"Can you guess who I am writing about?" asked he, at length.

"No, indeed—how should I?"

"Well, then, I am trying to describe you to her. I mentioned your name in my last letter, and my mother, who is the kindest and dearest of parents, and always takes an interest in all I love, has expressed a wish to know what you are like."

"And what have you told her?" asked Catherine. "Do let me see, in order that I may be able to judge of your skill in portrait painting."

Raymond put the letter into her hand; and bending over her as she perused it, sought eagerly to catch the expression of that half averted face.

"No, no," said Catherine, rising with some confusion; "I have no right to pry into your secret thoughts. My curiosity on the subject is all gone now; I dare say you have spoken a great deal better of me than I deserve."

"Impossible!" replied her companion, in a low voice. "But seriously, Catherine, I have told her, and now I tell you, that next to herself I love you better than any one else in the world!"

"What, before your brother?" murmured the young girl, trying to smile, when she could have almost wept at the tide of mingled feelings which came rushing over her heart.

"We cannot love those whom we feel to be so much above us," said Raymond, bitterly.

"Oh, yes, better—a thousand times better!" replied Catherine. "There is something holy in such affection."

"It may seem so to you, who are only a woman, but men feel differently on this subject. And now, Catherine, be equally candid with me, and confess how many stand before me in your affections. Nay, speak freely, for I am prepared to find myself at the bottom of a long list."

A few weeks ago. Catherine would have

quickly run over the names of her father, Walter De Lyle, Isabel, and a host of others; but now it seemed as though she had been like her companion, a lonely being from her very childhood, and had met for the first time something worthy of her love. When she remembered all Walter's kindness and affection, it seemed almost ungrateful to leave out his name, and yet she could not bring herself to utter it, and Raymond Berrington was left to draw his own conclusions from her long and embarrassed silence. If one might judge from his flashing eyes and proud smile, they were favourable to his own wishes, and consistent with the usual vanity of mankind.

It is a general complaint with the aged that things are very different now to what they were in their young days, nay, that the very seasons themselves have undergone a change, and the summers are not half so long and bright as they can remember them; but it is the glory of their own youth only that has departed. The sun

always shines for the young, and it is wise and good for them to lay up a bright store of joyous recollections against that time when the memory of the past shall be all that is left them—when they shall sit feebly in that very sunshine where they danced years ago and look within rather than without for happiness. Woe in that day to such as have neglected to garner up a still holier and more precious heritage of sweet thought! Some such reflections as the above, must surely have occurred to the little party assembled at Mrs. Mortimer's, and they were busy storing up glad materials for after meditation; they were all certainly very happy and merry.

In the morning they took long drives over a verdant and beautiful country, the timid going in low pony chaises, and the more adventurous on horseback. Catherine always preferred the latter, and although Raymond could not but admire her graceful form, and exquisite horsemanship, he often wished that she had not rode

quite so well, and would have been better pleased to have lingered by her side, soothing her fears, and enjoying that pleasant feeling of superiority which is so flattering to the pride of man.

Sometimes those on horseback would ride races together, laughing, screaming, and shouting to one another, with their hair waving in the wind, and their cheeks glowing with exercise. But Catherine never rode with any spirit after the first time, and when compelled to do so always suffered herself to be beaten. In some things she had grown strangely keen-sighted, what woman does not when she loves! Far, oftener, however, Raymond and she would linger together in the green, quiet lanes, and meet the rest of the party on their return with an air of unaffected wonder at the rate they must have gone at! In their evening walks she took his arm so naturally that after a time no one else thought of offering one, and even Philip Lindsay contented himself with a low,

sneering laugh at the young lovers, who would wander in the sunless woods, or by the borders of the shining lake, and feeling as if there were only themselves in the whole world.

At such times Raymond used to speak of his mother, and try to make Catherine love her from his description, looking forward to their meeting as a thing of course, although his companion while she listened with a throbbing heart, dared not think how it was to be brought about. Or he would tell her how, ever since he could remember, he had been neglected and scorned for his more fortunate elder brother, and pour out the bitter hate with which he looked in return upon those who had thus trampled on the best and holiest feelings of his nature, and Catherine would weep and try to soothe him. Confessing to her his comparative poverty, at which she only smiled—his deep passionate love, and then she trembled and wept again but not in sorrow—Oh, those were happy times! There was however even then

something exacting in the disposition of Raymond Berrington, and Catherine dared not give way to the natural feelings of her heart, and laugh with his brother, whom she loved for his free, joyous spirit, or reply as she often felt tempted to do to the careless *badinage* of Philip Lindsay, for fear of his anger, evinced rather by silence than in words. And yet after all, when a woman really loves, these restraints are little felt; for to her there is but one being in the whole world!

At this time Catherine was scarcely seventeen, and her lover only a few years older; he was very tall and slight, with a singularly fair complexion, and dark auburn hair, rather inclined to curl. His eyes, which seldom met those of another, were grey, with long dark lashes, and altogether the face was one of great beauty, only relieved from the charge of effeminacy by the haughty curved lip and lofty brow. To those who marked him closer there was a restless nervousness in the frequent con-

traction of the mouth, which gave little promise of firmness or decision, and a perpetual change of colour upon his now flushed now white cheek which spoke fearfully of inward disease. But then his father, whom he so much resembled, died at the age of five and twenty of consumption.

Mrs. Berrington was proud of her eldest son, whom she looked upon as the inheritor of all the honours of their ancient name, and destined from his strength of constitution and cheerfulness of spirit to a long and happy life: but she loved the younger one as mothers only love. His feebleness served as an excuse for her to keep him constantly with her, and what the boy gained in strength of body from her unceasing care, he lost daily in mental vigour; nor did this make itself felt until he was too old and too proud to alter its effects, which settled like a dark cloud over his whole future life. Conscious of his own deficiencies he saw or fancied scorn where it was not even meant, and met it with

the bitterness of a broken but not humbled spirit. He sought refuge in silence, and became alienated as it were from the world; and yet far from blaming the too anxious fondness of his mother for all this misery and degradation it served only to forge a fresh link in the chain which bound them together, and to make her the more indispensably necessary to his happiness.

As he grew in years, it seemed to Mrs. Berlington as though the young husband and father, whom she had so long lamented, was come back to her from the dead, nor could she get rid of the conviction that the most terrible part of her existence was destined to live over again, with all its fears, its agony, its desolation and despair, leaving her a second time alone in the world, but now childless, and without hope, save in the grave, which had closed over all she loved. Can we wonder with such feelings that Raymond should become inexpressibly dear to her, the more so

the more she felt how likely he was to be a sufferer from her injudicious fondness. He was however himself the first to see the propriety of their separating for a time, and to any one but that parent who had made every thought of his heart her constant and daily study, his brief leave-taking might have appeared cold and passionless. But she knew the struggle which it cost him to subdue all semblance of emotion, and repressing her own tenderness, parted from him with a smile. Too well did Raymond Berrington know that in quitting her he lost his only friend—the only being on earth who could understand or appreciate him, but the fear of his brother's ridicule was even a more powerful feeling; and no utterance of all those natural and passionate yearnings of a young heart for its early home, ever escaped from his sealed lips during an absence purposely prolonged in order to convince those who pretended to be sceptical on the point, that he could exist without his mother.

It is more than probable that had he met Catherine under any other circumstances than the present, she would have been the last person in the world likely to win his affections. He would have shrank dazzled before the blaze of her rare beauty and talents; but her gentleness—her sorrow won insensibly upon his heart. It is an obvious fact, borne out by the constant experience of daily life, that when a girl reaches this great epoch in her existence, or in common phraseology, “falls in love,” her whole nature undergoes a change, and the most volatile become in a measure subdued. Self has ceased to be the principle object of attention—pride has become merged in another, and they grow pensive and silent—silent for very happiness! The great end of life has been accomplished, and they are content to sit down beneath the calm sunshine of one smile, rather than court as before the admiration of the world.

As for Catherine, she saw everything

through the bright veil of young romance—a high, proud spirit scorned—despised—crushed, because of its poverty, by the world, and dependent on her for its future happiness, fancying, as girls are so apt to do on such occasions, that she alone could understand and appreciate him, and gifting him with a thousand attributes which had existence only in her own imagination. It was one of those mysteries of the affections at which we so often wonder in real life, seeking vainly for some reason, some hidden sympathy which could have drawn together beings so dissimilar; and striving to find a clew to the deep and passionate love of woman thrown away, as it seems to us, in very wantonness. But once bestowed, enduring to the last with a constancy which hallows the object of her attachment in the eyes of the world, even as it is hallowed and venerated in the changeless depths of her own young, loving heart.

CHAPTER VI

Where are they now...who used at morn to gambol
Like bounding roebucks in our sunny path ?
Where are they now...who shared our evening ram-
ble,
And made the greenwood vocal with their laugh ?
Where are they now from earth's glad pathway
riven ?

We trust in Heaven !

Mrs. Cornwell Baron Wilson.

CATHERINE had written frequently to her father and Walter, telling them how well and happy she was, but never by a strange chance mentioning the name of her lover, and the assurance of her health caused them to delay

leaving town until the latest moment; but the once fondly looked for mandate arrived at last.

"No bad news from home, I hope," said Mrs. Mortimer, anxiously regarding her changeful countenance as she perused the letter.

"On the contrary, my dear aunt," replied Catherine, looking quickly up. "My father is quite well, and writes me word that he shall be here to-morrow to take me on with him to Walsingham Abbey."

"We shall be sorry to part with you," said the old lady, glancing archly at Raymond Berrington as he arose up and sauntered carelessly to the window. "But I will try and persuade my brother to remain here a few days or leave you behind him a little longer."

"Nay," said Catherine with a smile, "I believe he will not be persuaded to part with me again in a hurry."

"Does Mr. De Lyle accompany your father?" asked Mrs. Mortimer.

"I hope so!" was the eager reply.

"It is many years now since I have seen him," continued the old lady, "but if he only fulfils the bright promise of his boyhood he must be all that is good and noble."

"He is indeed," said Catherine with affectionate warmth, and happily unconscious of the flashing eyes that were so earnestly rivetted upon her countenance. "Poor Walter! he must have missed me sadly."

"Your pity, Miss Walsingham, belongs rather to us who are so soon to be deprived of the pleasure of your society, than to one about to be restored to that blessing," said Philip Lindsay in a low voice.

Catherine smiled half in scorn, as she remembered how very lately it was that he had thought it worth his while to seek it.

"I suppose you were too much engaged with your letter to hear our plan of amusement for this evening?" continued her companion.

"I am afraid I was, Mr. Lindsay, but per-

haps you will take the trouble to repeat it to me."

"Well then, as it promises to be a splendid moonlight night we are going on the lake; I shall take my flute, and Herbert Berrington his guitar, and we hope for the added minstrelsy of many a sweet voice."

"How delightful!" exclaimed Catherine, "we can fancy ourselves at Venice."

"The very thing that occurred to Herbert, who, to aid the deception, has been superintending the adjustment of a small, coloured lamp in the prows of our tiny vessels—gondolas if you will. So that with these, and the bright eyes of our fair companions, we mean to outshine the very stars themselves!"

Catherine turned quite naturally to Raymond as if to make him a sharer in her pleasurable anticipations, but he was still standing gloomily apart.

"Mr. Berrington will not accompany us," said Philip Lindsay with a slight sneer, "his

upheld her own dignity of character, while that of Elfine sometimes precipitated her from that strict line of conduct, which, with all the levity of her manners, she knew it to be her duty to pursue.

But Elfine Harolde, besides these several faults that chequered her generous and noble nature had yet again a very great one,—and yet the fair reader of eighteen may not perhaps think it so; certainly it is regarded with very lenient eyes in the present day—and I am afraid no lady who has the slightest pretensions to beauty would not but agree to reckon it a very agreeable one. What then was this fault? It was an inclination for coquetry, for downright flirting.

“Bye-the-bye, what is flirting?”

Ah! gentle reader, do not ask the question again—have you never practised it?—if so, I need not explain it to you; and to the uninitiated I shall only say, that it is a most pleasant mode of passing one's time away,—

particularly when at a ball. And yet strange to say no person has yet told what it exactly is, or what are its precise limits; for, oftentimes, it is not by words, but by looks that we flirt; and then again not by looks, but words, or some peculiar intonations of the voice when both the language of the eyes and of the tongue express nothing save an every day sort of politeness. Now, I have often watched a lady and gentleman when engaged in conversation, who, while pursuing a very staid discourse have by animated gestures carried on a deep flirtation. Yes, for though talking upon a dull, threadbare subject, a smile, a glance, coupled with the most insipid words, enhanced their value, and gave them a secret and treasured meaning. Again, there is the plain downright flirting, consisting of foolish compliments, repartee, and nonsense; *et puis*, the flirting of the eyes which is still more dangerous—ah! what tell tales the eyes are!—but the deep, composed flirtations are the worst of all.

Reader, (I speak more especially to a mamma, an aunt, or a guardian,) if ever you should see a couple talking earnestly, yet quietly, in a comfortable corner of a ball-room, and if you are in any wise concerned for the parties, and do not countenance such proceedings, separate them instantly; for, be sure, this kind of flirtation is the most serious, and most *attrayante*, as the young people are then dreaming of love in a cottage, and other outré impossibilities.

When do you ever hear of a runaway match being a happy one?

“Never!—particularly when the truants have not a shilling to live upon, and cry “All for love! and the world well lost.”

“Ah! it is a true old saying which tells us, that: “When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out through the window.” My dear young ladies, never believe that you and your husbands can quietly and comfortably starve to death, until you have weathered through a great many of the difficulties and trials of life;

for poverty is one of the worst of evils, because it brings a thousand others in its train. Not until you are grey with age does that blessed guest of the human breast, patience, visit you ; for years alone bring experience, and experience, patience ; and it is only by patience, young friends, that you will be taught to bear with the hardships which attend the poor ; to see the loving heart of him whom you chose for your partner for life, soured by disappointment and want, change to the cold and distrustful—the indifferent one ; to know there is no hope of lessening the privations that rob yourself, your children, and your husband of the health which alone enables you to bear up against them ; to feel that all borne down by misery, attenuated by labour, must one by one drop into the silent grave ; that only death can bring an end to the sorrows you endure. Can you bear this patiently, quietly, now in the bursting forth of every fresh and beautiful hope ? No ! you would break forth into the loud wail

of despair, and murmur at the hardness of your lot; for hope, youth's dearest gift, too often leaves us to the unmitigated gloom of despair. Young hearts break sooner than old ones. Does not the flower full of life snap from off the stem if you brush it harshly, while the withered blossom droops, yet lingers still upon the stalk? And say not that the broken heart soon finds a balm for all its griefs in the cold slumbers of the dead; not so, not so, it may live for years, crushed and broken, seeking for rest yet finding none!

But the aged bear unmurmuringly all the ills of poverty, and yet live on—and calmly; for the shock to their feelings is not so great,—they are nearer their last home. They think a little while and they shall be at rest, at rest from all the troubles that oppress them; and no murmur escapes their lips; for knowing more of the vicissitudes of life, and disabused of the world, they seek not to awaken the pity of those around them. If they see the loving

heart change, and friends depart, when the breath of suspicion whispers as truth the surmises of their own distrustful hearts, while no hand is stretched out to help them at the hour of need, they never thought, it would be otherwise; and, expecting no pity, stifle their complaints within their own bosoms, and die quietly enough.

But the young! the young!—they trust more on the kindness of their fellow creatures—they hope for awhile; but when they know those hopes will never be realized, the whirlwind that sweeps over them, awakens a like tempest within their hearts; their passions borrow the language of despair, and of resentment; their cry is loud and bitter, but it is of no avail; they look for compassion, and find it not; people say it is their own foolishness that has brought on the misery they endure; and thus they drag on a wretched existence. Alas! for the young, the trusting and the loved!

Pause then, gentle ladies, ere you yield to

the charms of romance, and dream of Love upon the threshold of poverty; let not the enthusiasm of your feelings lead you to plunge those you love into the depths of misery; wait awhile: fortune favours the patient, the faithful, the persevering.

But to return to my theme.

As regards flirting, some very unjust suspicions are at times attached to persons who are only trying to make themselves agreeable. Oh! ye mamas and aunts! fear not a man of sense who can, with instructive conversation, enlarge the grasp of mind your daughters may possess; but fear ye the fool, who, lisping nonsense, entertains them with the trifling of an idiot, and gradually undermines the principles it had been your care to inculcate. But there are also sensible men who, when talking to a female, think they must carefully eschew any particle of sense, which may occasionally sparkle amidst the absurdities of a morning visit, or accidentally lighten the clouds of nonsense,

that rise from the atmosphere of a modern ball room.

And now that I am upon the subject, I will say, it is chiefly owing to the insipidity of the gentlemen that ladies excel in this particular accomplishment. If a gentleman, when leading his partner to the dance, *will* consider her as a being utterly devoid of sense or opinion, save upon the worn-out and trifling topics of the hour, what has the lady to do, but to a fool be a seeming fool! for, what woman would exert herself to raise her character in the estimation of a person, who could not apparently appreciate it!

And Elfine Harolde!

Elfine Harolde was a flirt; it was in her very nature to be so, and the art of teasing, in which she excelled, had been cultivated to an excessive degree. A winter in town, under the chaperonage of Lady Granard, had also perfected her in that self-possession, which it is an essential point in a coquette to gain, and which

being joined to her own natural capabilities, succeeded in giving a finish to her manners, that established her at once as an exquisite specimen of a flirt.

Such was Elfine Harolde,

And now there remains but one member of the family at the Hall to be described, and that is its master. Old Mr. Harolde, kind-hearted and generous, loved everybody and everything, until disabused of his likings by some glaring fact of discrepancy ; he was blunt and good-natured, his speech expressing his thoughts as they passed through his mind ; which habit sometimes unpleasantly startled the listeners by the enunciation of various uncouth truths and observations which people generally keep to themselves. Yet no one could dislike him ; he was the friend of the rich, by whom his sterling character of plain and honest good sense was fully appreciated and respected ; and he was the father of the poor around him, whose hearts he had won by

his affability, and kind solicitude for their welfare.

Having thus afforded the reader an insight into the different characters of the Haroldes, I will now pursue my story.

CHAPTER VII.

My star stood still before thee.

LORD BYRON.

THREE weeks had elapsed since the arrival of Everard at the Hall, but no progress had been made towards a nearer intimacy with Ada Harolde, and the daily intercourse between them was each hour becoming more irksome. In vain did Elfine try to make them understand each other better; in vain did Mr. Harolde wonder at the seriousness of his daughter, and urge her to resort to her usual

occupations; all would not do. Meanwhile Everard had not heard or seen anything of Charles Lennox in their drives round the neighbourhood, and he thought at last that he must have relinquished his foolish project, and set off for his aunt's at Walmer; but this was not the case. One day as he and Mr. Harolde were riding through the village, accompanied by the two cousins, who followed in an open barouche, the ladies, by some caprice or other, having that day preferred a seat in the carriage to the more fatiguing exercise of horsemanship for which the gentlemen professed themselves advocates—Charles suddenly emerged from a small cottage on the road-side, and perceiving Everard, bowed; then casting a hasty look upon his beautiful companions, passed on. He had not, however, been unobserved; Mr. Harolde, who was looking at him, turned quickly round to Effingham, and in a voice expressive of some agitation, exclaimed—

"I know that young fellow's face—is he a friend of yours, Everard—tell me his name."

"Charles Lennox," answered Effingham, rather astonished at the impetuosity of the old man.

"Charles Lennox! yes! it must be his son," again said old Mr. Harolde, as if pursuing some inward train of thought. "Who was his father? Was he not John Lennox, of Bexley Manor?"

"Yes," replied Effingham.

"Call him back then, Everard—call him back, I must speak to him. I never saw a more striking resemblance between father and son; only this young gentleman is of slighter make, and more lady-like appearance than poor John Lennox—call him back, Everard."

"Why, uncle, why?" asked Elfine.

"Why, niece, why? I loved his father;—when we were young we were always together—a good and a true friend was Lennox. Poor fellow; he died ere he was two and twenty,

and his pretty little wife also. It will revive old days to speak with his son—once again, Everard, call him hither; it is the whimsey of an old man, and must be gratified—see! he is walking very slowly down the slope yonder.”

And his handsome old face glowing with eagerness, Mr. Harolde pushed the horse on which Everard was mounted a few paces from him, while exulting in the rencontre he turned to his daughter and niece and said—

“ You children cannot understand what I feel; but I remember this young man when he was not more than six years of age, and a fine little fellow he was! Both his parents were then dead, and he lived with a Miss Lennox, a maiden aunt of his on the father’s side. She resided at that period in the north of England, where I, having occasion to pass through the town she dwelt in, and having been formerly acquainted with her, once called, chiefly to see this young gentleman, who is my godson. Did you know that, Elfi?”

"How could I, uncle?" answered Elfine, looking surprised.

"Ah! to be sure! it could not interest you, my dear," rejoined Mr. Harolde; "and though I might have mentioned the circumstance when speaking of the untimely death of my old friend, you, most probably, have never noticed it."

"And what kind of little boy was he, uncle?" said Elfine—"as pale as he is now, perhaps?"

"Pale! is he pale?" answered Mr. Harolde, with a laugh. "You must have taken good notice of him, Elfi!"

"But uncle," rejoined she, "do you not know that I have met him before? This is the very gentleman who accompanied Mr. Effingham hither, and whom I took for a lady in disguise."

Mr. Harolde smiled.

"A lady disguised! well, to be sure he always looked like a girl. When I saw him last how do you think he was employed, Elfine?"

" Learning his letters ?"

" Dressing a doll."

" Oh !"

" Yes—he was seated on Miss Lennox's lap dressing a doll. His frock was of white silk as well as I can remember ; his little, bare arms were covered with bracelets and chains, and he had actually earrings in his ears : I noticed that particularly, for the singularity of his dress struck me, and I could not forbear asking the woman whether she were mad to put such things on a boy."

" I should have done so, too," answered Elfine,—“ but hush ! here he is."

And as she spoke, Everard and Charles came up. The latter, who very willingly complied with the request of Mr. Harolde, could scarcely refrain from smiling when he saw his wish of being introduced to the family thus unexpectedly gratified, and the laugh was quivering on his lips as Mr. Harolde greeted him with—

"Now, before a word is spoken by other than myself, I must explain—"

"Yes, uncle, do, by all means," interrupted Elfine; "it will save a great deal of complimentary nonsense from Mr. Lennox."

Charles stared, and Mr. Harolde continued.

"Very well said, niece! Young gentleman, you must know, then, that your father was a very old friend of mine; besides which I am your godfather—did you know this?"

"No, I really cannot say that I ever heard it before," answered Charles, inwardly surprised and pleased at the announcement; "yet I feel great pleasure in the fact you have just stated."

"What! has not your aunt, Miss Lennox, ever told you that you were old Charley Harolde's godson?"

"Ah! now I recollect," began Charles; "pardon my forgetfulness—yes, I think I remember something about a Mr. Harolde."

"There, there—say no more; do not ran-

sack your memory to find occurrences that never happened. I have not seen you more than five or six times in my life; a train of untoward events have always separated us; the last time I saw you—”

“ You were dressing a doll, Mr. Lennox,” said Elfine.

This caused a laugh from all, and Charles Lennox replied—

“ A most feminine accomplishment, truly ! But how comes it that this lady has gained the knowledge of that unfortunate amusement of my childhood !—for unfortunate I must reckon it when I see so expressive a smile of contempt upon the lips of my fair accuser.”

“ Oh ! ” answered Elfine, with a laugh ; “ my uncle related the apparently characteristic anecdote, but a few moments since.”

“ Indeed ! then I suppose I am addressing—”

“ My niece, Elfine Harolde,” interrupted Mr. Harolde ; “ and pray, young gentleman, listen to me : she’s a mettlesome little thing,

and throws the gauntlet at everybody. Her wit cuts sharp, and her spirits never flag; but she's good-hearted enough, nevertheless, so don't let any of her sarcastic attacks wound you; stand to your ground well, and she'll like you the better for it."

"Alas! answered Charles, "even the encouragement which your latter words bespeak will scarcely, I am afraid, give me sufficient hardiness to withstand the artillery of Miss Harolde's eyes; even in the present case I give up my defence and cry for mercy."

"Granted!" cried Elfine Harolde; "your appeal came just in time to prevent us over-leaping the boundaries of bearable nonsense."

"Charles," said Mr. Harolde, a few minutes after, "I shall call you by your christian name; I hate ceremony with friends, and therefore break through all its rules whenever I can. By-the-bye, how is Miss Lennox? I am anxious for your answer, because there was a sort of—"

"Flirtation," suggested Elfine.

"Exactly so," rejoined Mr. Harolde—"a sort of flirtation between her and me in our younger days. Ah! you may laugh, but those were better times for courtship than the present."

And the eye of Mr. Harolde rested unconsciously on Everard and Ada, who were as far separated from each other as was possible with the consistency of the circle into which they were formed. Both noticed that involuntary glance, and both blushed, though neither raised their eyes from the ground.

"How is Miss Lennox?" again asked Mr. Harolde.

"In very good health, I thank you," replied Charles; "she is at Walmer for the present; I was there about two days ago. Yes," he continued, as he watched a smile upon the countenance of Everard, "yes, I was there about two days ago; I have passed a week with her since my return from France."

And this was true ; Chlares had in reality stolen some time from his romantic ramble to pay his respects to his aunt.

" I am glad she is well," answered Mr. Harolde. " When do you return home ?"

" I do not exactly know," Charles replied ;
" within three weeks I must be in London to meet my uncle, Colonel Lennox ; but I think I shall remain until then in this neighbourhood—the scenery is so beautiful !"

" Oh ! you are a lover of the picturesque, are you ?" rejoined Mr. Harolde. " So am I."

" A lover of caprice and whim," muttered Everard to himself.

" I hope we shall see you often during your stay in this part of the country," again began Mr. Harolde ; " and that you may not lose your way on this road a second time, whenever you favor me with a visit, pray come home with us to dinner to-day. You will afford yourself the opportunity of studying the different points of view that may guide you on

your way for the future, if remembered ; and there's a seat in the carriage, if you like."

This invitation was extremely acceptable to Charles, but before he answered in the affirmative he stole a glance at Effingham to see whether it was as agreeable to his feelings as to his own, (for Charles was scrupulously delicate in these matters) and seeing that it was so he instantly thanked Mr. Harolde with sincere warmth, and accepted it.

A merry evening was passed at the Hall by Charles, Elfine, and Mr. Harolde ; and even Effingham and Ada found some relief in being released from the irksome remarks of the latter, who was listening, with laughing eagerness to the attacks made by Elfine upon poor Charles, as he essayed to uphold the French ladies as models of perfection : an impolitic measure, considering he was contesting the point with an animated and beautiful English girl.

" She will run you down, she will run you down," said Mr. Harolde, for the seventh or

eightth time; "no one has a quicker wit at argument than Elfi; she will run you down."

"To be sure, I shall, uncle. I never engage in disputes excepting when I am sure of being successful; you always admit I am in the right whenever we disagree."

"Whenever you undertake to convince me, certainly, Elfi!"

"May I ask," said Charles, "if Miss Harolde triumphs by eloquence, or by the force of reasoning?"

Mr. Harolde laughed outright.

"Did you hear that, Elfine? which am I to say?"

"Do not answer him at all, uncle. Mr. Lennox has a very treacherous mode of fighting; he never comes to the point; he never stands the onset, but always retreats, just giving a side-shot as he flies. Yet it is singular with what warmth he advocates his cause; I should say from the eagerness of the defence, that some enchantress of la belle France had

obtained, by her Circean arts, the mastery of his heart. Now is not that the truth, Mr. Effingham? If you answer me sincerely, I will forgive his unpatriotic taste, for we know every feeling bows to the power of love; but the truth, the truth, Mr. Effingham."

"I cannot frame an untruth, Miss Harolde, even could I by so doing secure my friend your forgiveness," answered Effingham.

"Your reply is an evasive one," returned Elfine; "you are a faithful friend, but you are not a follower of truth. Do you coincide with Mr. Lennox on the subject we are discussing?"

"No," said Effingham—"I entirely differ from him in opinion; I believe it is only in England that an Englishman will find a woman whose character would accord with his standard of perfection.

"And yet," observed Charles Lennox, "the only woman for whom I ever heard you express an interest was a Frenchwoman."

Charles referred to Coralie when he said this,

and did not reflect that Ada Harolde was present, until the quick blush upon the cheek of Elfine, whose eyes, with the rapidity of lightning, glanced towards Ada, and as swiftly turned with a look of indignation upon Everard, bade him recollect himself and he hastily added—

“ And that was but the interest of a moment, for he never saw her but once.”

Though this was the best termination he could possibly contrive for his unfortunate mistake, yet it did not remove the impressions his words had awakened in the minds of Elfine and Ada. His confusion was noticed and remembered; and the uncomfortable start with which Everard interrupted the communication seemed to confirm their suspicions. He looked towards Ada, and she, of all the party, alone maintained her self-possession; while Elfine, anxious to dispel the awkward embarrassment that had arisen, addressed a rather silly question to Everard as she rung for tea, and then

seating herself by a splendid harp that stood in a corner of the room, she called Charles to her side.

"Now, Mr. Lennox," she said, "you must listen to me whether you will or no, because I intend to show off all my accomplishments to-night to see whether I cannot outshine *les belles Françaises*. You may cry 'Vive la France,' if you will, while I sing 'God Save the Queen,' and 'Rule Britannia.'"

"Do you consider me a traitor, then?" said Charles, as he advanced towards her. "I must not let you continue to think so, Miss Harolde, as I see such a belief will lower me in your opinion; know I am a true Briton at heart."

"Indeed! then if you are a good patriot you will join me in the song I am going to attempt; it is an English one; therefore summon up your feelings of affection for your native country, and at once give your consent to my proposal."

But Charles would not.

"Very well! if you will not, I must sing alone," replied Elfine; and she sat down and commenced a beautiful and pathetic ballad, which she sang with great simplicity of manner, totally different to the idea Charles had formed of her execution in that kind of music. When she had finished, she rose from her seat, and called on Ada to fill the place she left.

"You must sing," said she; and then added in a lower voice, "Effingham loves music; see, how attentively he listened to me, Ada—how then will he feel when he hears you?"

"Particularly stupid and annoyed," answered her cousin, with a smile of scorn upon her lip, "if you wish to make him look even more miserable than he does at present," she glanced across the room towards Everard, who was talking with a distant air to Mr. Harolde, "certainly, Elfine, I will comply with your request."

"Will you not favour us, Miss Harolde?"

said Charles, who had by this time sauntered to where they stood.

"Oh yes! just try to amuse Mr. Lennox, Ada; for this is an evening of practical proofs of our various accomplishments," cried Elfine, and drawing her cousin aside for one moment she added in a whisper—"Effingham is gone with uncle to the chess-table in the furthest drawing-room."

Ada laughed and answered—

"As you like, Elfine; I see I shall have no rest until I have performed my allotted task. What shall it be?"

Elfine decided quickly, and Ada sat down to the harp, while Charles, whose curiosity respecting her had never slackened, listened attentively to every word she uttered. As she proceeded in her song, the cold and proud look settled on her features, gradually faded away; the calm blue eye brightened beneath its long dark lashes, and a faint yet lovely colour tinged her cheek. All this Charles saw, and the emotion

which he thus noticed gave him a yet further insight into the character of the fair musician; for, as he himself had said, he was well skilled in woman's ways. He was gazing earnestly at her, and was watching every change that passed across her features, which expressed, with the rapidity of lightning, the different feelings that swayed her, when he saw them suddenly return to their usual inexpressiveness, and looking for the cause he beheld Everard standing at a little distance from the harp, and whose entrance had not been perceived by himself or Elfine, until the constrained manner of Ada betrayed it.

A meaning look which he directed towards Everard was instantly answered by one of the deepest impatience, as he turned away and threw himself upon a chair at the other end of the room, where he awaited, in a kind of self-created misery, the conclusion of the song, which came at last, and with it came the tea.

Everard had been attracted to the drawing-room by the voice of Ada which had seemed to

express all that he had ever hoped to find within a woman's heart. He had made his approach cautiously, for the experience of a few days had taught him the extreme difference of her manners towards him, and towards others, and he wished to see whether, when unembarrassed by his presence, she was as grave and as cold, as she had always appeared to him. But his entrance was anticipated, and the sudden fall in her voice apprised him that he was discovered ere he could fully ascertain the truth of his suspicions; there was a pier-glass opposite the door, and within it Ada had seen his reflection before he passed its threshold.

"Strange!" thought Everard, "why all this pride to me? Have I not sought in every way to soften the recollection of past neglect? Have I not watched each word, each look of mine that nothing might escape me which could in aught augment the indifference, the dislike she evinces towards me—determined to fulfil the promise which I gave. Does she—can she

love another? If so, this match will prove but a bond of misery to both. Even as it is, I can never love her; and could I know the true state of her affections I might at once accomplish the dissolution of the tie that rankles in both our hearts."

Poor, poor Ada Harolde! her every effort was to hide the existence of the love she bore him.

CHAPTER VIII.

Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,
Not once had turned to either side—
Nor once did those sweet eyelids close
Or shade the glance o'er which they rose,
But round their orbs of deeper blue
The circling white dilated grew—
And there with glassy gaze she stood
As ice were in her curdled blood.

LORD BYRON.

Yes ! the links that once bound us are broken—
They were slighted I know by thee ;
And the vows mine heart would have spoken,
May never be breathed by me !
And thou hast refused to love me—
How chill on mine heart fell that tone !
But my spirit yet is above thee,
And my love for thee still is unknown.

ABOUT three weeks after the above events a ball was given at the Hall, and among the invites

Charles Lennox was enrolled; much to the satisfaction it must be acknowledged of Elfine Harolde, whose thoughts had lately wandered continually to him, although she deprecated, with apparent dislike, to her cousin and uncle, the various weak points in his character—but ah! little Elfine, it was those very peculiarities that attracted you!

“The hair parted in the middle, and falling in long ringlets—yes! actually in ringlets over his shoulders, Ada—can anything look more ridiculous?” asked Elfine, continually.

“But why dwell upon it so much?” was the answer she received one day from her cousin, “it is of very little consequence either to you or to me.”

“True,” said Elfine—but did she think so? Then after a few moment’s silence—“If his hair were black like Effingham’s it would not so much matter; being, however, as it is, of a light flaxen, he looks exactly like a doll—does he not, Ada?”

“ Yes, indeed,” she replied, “ so he does.”

And Elfine found nothing more to say.

“ Oh ! you look perfectly beautiful to-night !” exclaimed Elfine on the evening of the ball to Ada, as she turned from her dressing-table, where she had been arranging a wreath of ivy leaves in her long black tresses, “ yes, Ada, you look perfectly beautiful ! That darling spray of silver wheat, and those dear little blue-bells, become you so well—if Effingham does not fall in love with you directly, he is an insensible, a piece of ice—I shall not know what to call him—how very, very lovely you are this evening !”

“ That is as much as to say I am not so always,” replied Ada, smiling.

“ No ! I do not mean that ;—but to-day you surpass yourself. Ah ! there cousin, I have been speaking of Effingham—it is that which has given such a beautiful glow to your cheeks.”

And Elfine looked laughingly at Ada, but

there was no smile in return, for her cousin suddenly withdrew the arm, which was leaning upon hers, and walked hastily from her, as she exclaimed—

“Effingham, indeed! what mean you, Elfine? Our marriage will be a marriage de convenance—there is little love on either side.”

“I think not so;” replied Elfine, as she watched the crimson blush that coloured, for a moment, the brow of Ada, and then she added—
“Effingham has of late paid you very great attention; and sometimes he dwells upon your words as if he wished to read your most secret thoughts. Once or twice I have seen an expression of surprise pass over his features when you have spoken on some subject that interested you. I am quite sure his curiosity is awakened, and that ere long he will love you.”

“It is of very little consequence whether he will or no,” said Ada, coldly.

“Of very little consequence! how can you

say so, Ada—you, who have the highest notions respecting the mutual affection of a husband and wife—you who would die beneath his neglect, if you should chance to love him, and knew he loved you not. Ada, dear Ada, do not marry Effingham if you think it will be so; even though you love him, do not! It is better to crush all hope at once, by breaking the tie that now binds you to him, than to let it linger on for years beneath the calm indifference of one, who would vow to cherish you until death, yet will speak that vow as if it were a thing of nought. If you love him——”

“I have never loved him!” interrupted Ada, and she raised her eyes to those of Elfine, with a look of impenetrable pride; yet ere another moment passed the large blue orbs were filled with tears that chased each other down her burning cheeks, and which in vain she strove to hide.

“Ada!” exclaimed Elfine, as she clung closely around her, “I knew not that my

words would cause these tears,—I knew not that—”

“I loved him!” said Ada, bitterly, as she disengaged herself from Elfine’s embrace, “nor how long that same love has been the master passion of my heart. Ever since we were betrothed my thoughts have centred in him; years have passed by, yet still that love, once born, has never ceased to exist; I love him, and he loves me not! Absence, indifference, neglect, could not extinguish that affection—yes, when, perhaps, not a thought of his was bestowed upon me, my very life was his—but I loved him, and he loves me not!”

She passed her hand across her face, as if to hide the emotion visible there; then slowly withdrawing it, she turned to Elfine, and with a countenance now perfectly calm, and on which no trace of passion lingered, she said, “We are late cousin, ere this some guests must have arrived; let us descend quickly.”

The first person who greeted him on their

entrance into the ball-room was Charles Lennox, who, pressed by Mr. Harolde to come early, had complied with his request with an alacrity which to Effingham was perfectly surprising; for, knowing as he did the extremely fastidious habits of his friend, he could scarcely credit his senses when he heard him promise to be at the Hall exactly at nine o'clock. Be this as it may, Charles arrived precisely at the time appointed, and his presence in some measure relieved Effingham and Ada from the irksome restraint they still felt in each other's society.

Gradually the rooms filled, and the dancing commenced.

"I wonder," said Elfine, towards the middle of the evening to her partner Everard Effingham, "I wonder you chose to dance a quadrille with me; had it been a waltz I should not have been so much surprised."

"Why so?" said Effingham.

"Oh! because it must be such a very great constraint upon your natural inclinations, which

are serious from all I can see, to dance with a person who loves nothing so well as laughing. In a waltz there is not much conversation, therefore, perhaps, you could have borne with me for awhile; but in a quadrille there are pauses which must be filled up by talking—how then came you to ask me to be your partner in this dance?”

“It may be,” answered Effingham, “that I thought you would spare me the trouble of speaking.”

“By speaking too much myself?—a gentle hint! But even in that case I should have thought you would have shunned me, as everything I talk of must be gay.”

“And do you think I dislike gaiety? You are mistaken—everything you talk of must be gay?—how then do you and your cousin agree in the choice of subjects for conversation when together?—for your characters are singularly different.”

“Not so much so as a careless observer would

imagine," said Elfine, with peculiar emphasis. "Ada is not so impenetrably serious."

"Indeed!" answered Effingham, as he conducted her back to her seat; but ere he could ask another question, some gentlemen joined her, and defeated all hopes of doing so. "Would you have me believe then, Mr. Lennox," said Ada, who was standing apart from the dancers, near an open window, that looked upon the lawn, "Would you have me believe then that the daughters of Italy alone feel the passion of love in its full force?"

"Have I failed to convince you of the truth of my assertion, Miss Harolde?" answered Charles.

"Yes, you have! You have been praising the beauties of the South,—they may be more beautiful than the fair haired children of the North in feature and in form; but theirs is not the beauty that springs from the heart: recollect, Mr. Lennox, we but just now agreed

that beauty in a great measure consisted in the expression of the countenance."

"And is not the countenance of the Italian girl strikingly beautiful in that particular? Does not the soul beam forth in every look?" interrupted Charles.

"The soul!" rejoined Ada, with a peculiarly contemptuous smile upon her lip, "the soul! Oh! you mean the free expression of every feeling that may agitate the human heart. Truly, that is a distinction to be wished for, if so admired; yet it is a distinction that I would ever shun."

"And why?"

"Because those who did not love me, even though I loved them, should never know the different emotions of joy, or of sorrow that might sway me. The Italian! yes the passion which reigns within her bosom is indeed clearly depicted in her countenance, and flashes forth in every look—but call you *that* love? It is a mixture of jealousy, of hate, and of revenge; it

will satiate its vengeance, when slighted, even upon the loved one, who hath awakened it, and dare all things to accomplish its purpose—call you that love? Love is an all enduring, all forgiving passion, fostered in silence and in secrecy; all faith, all benevolence, all gentleness;—can true love turn to hate?—Oh, never! never!”

A gentleman at this moment approached, and claimed the hand of Ada for the next dance, and she left Charles to meditate alone upon her words, which had seemed to reveal in their passionate eloquence a heart that had, and even yet felt the power of love.

Towards the end of the evening Charles and Effingham sauntered into a little back drawing-room to escape the heat of the ball-room. There was but one small lamp burning on the table, and the radiance of the moon that streamed in through the window overpowering it, the contrasted lights threw into darker shadows the obscurities of the apartment. They

were talking earnestly as they entered; for Charles was recounting his conversation with Ada, and Effingham was listening with ill concealed vexation, which at last broke forth in undisguised vehemence, as throwing himself upon the nearest sofa, he exclaimed, "Had I my own will I would sooner seek the grave than the hand of Ada Harolde!"

This was not perfectly true; but ere he had time to soften the first burst of his impatience, Ada Harolde herself stood before him.

She had arisen from a seat at the farther end of the room as they entered, and heard with full distinctness the exclamation of Everard. For some moments neither spoke; the confusion of Effingham was visibly depicted on his countenance, but Ada stood fixedly gazing at him; while Charles, who saw that she had overheard the words of his friend, and feeling that his presence must necessarily increase the embarrassment of both, instantly left the apartment. Yes! there Ada stood, mute and motionless; twice she

essayed to speak, and could not, while the colour gradually faded from her cheek, till it became as white as the purest marble, and her eyes were fastened upon Everard with an earnestness, an intensity that he could not resist. He arose from his seat—yet she stirred not; he took her hand within his, and for one moment he knelt before her: not a feature of the pale face he looked upon moved, and still the eyes pursued him with the same unshrinking glance, until her hand was suddenly withdrawn from his, as with a gesture of impatient pride she motioned him away; but in another moment she was at his side—he turned, and at length she spoke.

“Perhaps, it is better,” said Ada, in a clear, firm voice, “perhaps, it is better that our final parting should be at present; it will save both future time and trouble. I am glad that I know your real sentiments,—this occurrence has saved us from an unhappy union. Your stay here, of course, will be as short as possible

—it shall be my care to explain all to my father. Adieu, Mr. Effingham.”

As she spoke the last words, she extended her hand towards him with the most perfect nonchalance. He took it—gazed at her for a moment, and departed. “He cannot think I love him,” were the words the lips of Ada unconsciously uttered, as she watched the retreating form of Effingham until out of sight, “he cannot think I love him, and that is all I have now to care for. The grave rather than the hand of Ada Harolde!—Does he then so utterly dislike me? Does he hate me?”

And she repeated the last question again, as if to dwell upon the sounds her own lips had created.

“Ada, where are you? Have I found you at last?” said Elfine, entering a few moments after, and arousing her cousin from the painful reverie in which she was indulging—“Uncle says this must be the last quadrille, and he wishes you and Effingham to dance it together.

"It was a mistake to think that every person
would be so kind as to go to all times, and that this
is the case with all. Come directly; he is waiting
for you."

"Where is Effingham?" said Ada.

"In the hall. Come with me."

"I cannot, Elfine, I am too tired."

"Try well, I see you do not wish it, so I
will go, and frame some excuse for you. How
pale you are, Ada! I did not notice it before—
what is the matter?"

"Nothing," said Ada, trying to smile.

"Nothing?—that is not true; I can see by
the very smile with which you strive to deceive
me that there is something—tell me, dearest
Ada, are you ill?"

"Ill?—no, no, Elfine. You said this was
the very last quadrille, did not you?—I will
dance it then; but tell papa that I am engaged
to Sir Francis Ellerton this time, and therefore
Effingham cannot be my partner—tell him so."

"I will; but are you not too fatigued to dance at all?—you are still very pale."

"Am I, Elfine?—it is only the moonlight makes me appear so."

"The moonlight?" said Elfine, "well, perhaps it is." Yet she looked at her more earnestly than before, until she exclaimed as a tall fair man entered the room—"Ah! here is Sir Francis Ellerton himself. I was just going to run away with your partner, Sir Francis; you are but come in time to claim her."

"I should have thought Miss Ada Harolde might have remembered her promise to favour me with her hand for this dance," said the gentleman, and a shade of hauteur passed over his finely moulded features.

"Oh! she did remember you," said Elfine, smiling, "but the music had begun, and I was sent to engage her by proxy; so I counselled her to forget you as speedily as possible; however, she would not."

"She would not—" repeated Sir Francis

with a smile of satisfaction, "Miss Harolde," continued he addressing Ada, "is this true? Am I so flattered?"

"Elfine generally exaggerates," said Ada, with an air of vexation, "I leave it to your judgment to decide."

This was not a very intelligible answer; but the truth was, Ada did not know exactly what she said; and Sir Francis replied—

"Will you leave it to my wishes?"

"I like Sir Francis Ellerton much better than Effingham," said Elfine to herself as she followed Ada from the little boudoir, "I would that my sweet cousin were of the same opinion—but alas! for the vanity of human wishes!"

"And alas! for the vanity of human wishes!" sighed poor old Mr. Harolde the next morning, when descending to the breakfasting room he was met—not by the son of his old friend, but by a letter which explained in some degree to the senses of the astonished reader, the affair of the preceding night. The expressions, how-

ever, were so vague that Mr. Harolde could only comprehend that the match between Effingham and his daughter was entirely broken off, and that the writer had bid adieu to the Hall for ever; the how, the when, and the where, were yet unknown. "And alas! for the vanity of human wishes!" muttered Mr. Harolde, as he pondered over the letter in his hand, while awaiting the appearance of Ada at the breakfast table.

"Elfine, did you know anything of this?" were the words with which he greeted his niece, who first joined him.

"Know anything of what, uncle?" asked Elfine.

"Of this!" said Mr. Harolde, and he handed the letter to her.

"Effingham refused—gone!" exclaimed Elfine, in a voice of the deepest surprise—"It cannot be! impossible!"

"Then you knew nothing of it?" asked Mr. Harolde.

"Nothing!—nothing! Effingham gone!" exclaimed she again.

"Call Ada," said Mr. Harolde.

"I am here," replied the voice of his daughter, who entered at the moment.

"What means this, Ada?" said he, "Effingham is gone, and from what I understand you have refused him."

"Refused him?" thought Ada, as she took the letter from her father's hand, and scanned it over, "he might have said he refused me."

When she had perused its contents, however, she saw that Effingham had rather intimated his own wishes had been refused; and her heart thanked him, with all a woman's pride, for having deceived even her parent with respect to the relation of the real facts. Nothing was actually explained, but that the engagement between himself and her was at an end for ever; all else was vague and undefined; and when she had finished the letter, she found that she must take the weight of the refusal on herself, or a

once reveal everything. This she had not the courage to do, and she pursued the other course, although when asked by Mr. Harolde for the explanation of the circumstances attending it, and on what reason she had grounded her dismissal of Effingham, she could only answer that she did not like him.

“And why did you not like him?” said Mr. Harolde, “he was a very sensible young man, child, and just as serious as yourself; and though perhaps it would have been pain to me to part with you, Ada, yet would I have given you to him willingly, because I knew he was worthy of the dearest thing that on earth I could relinquish. If then, you have broken this engagement lightly, irreverently, it was foolishly done; if not, if you had reasons for doing so, tell me, Ada, what were they?”

“I have no other reason but that I could not like him, father.”

And Ada's eyes filled with tears, were bent to the ground, for she knew that Elfine heard

the falsehood she was uttering, yet she could not avow the truth. But Mr. Harolde was softened.

“ Well, child,” he said, and he drew her towards him, “ if you could not love him, perhaps it was better to refuse him. I could not, when I was young, have wedded one I did not love, and, I dare say, it is the same with you—there, there, do not cry—We are friends again, are we not?”

And not another word was said on the subject, although Mr. Harolde inwardly grieved over the abrupt termination of his favourite and long cherished project, and wondered what his daughter could find so very disagreeable in the behaviour or the appearance of the handsome and accomplished Everard Effingham.

To Elfine everything was revealed ; and fervent and deep was her indignation against Everard. Yet with all her affection for her cousin, Elfine could not be blind to the striking

coldness of her manners, and the apparent insensibility which she nursed. She had often tried to awaken the concealed energy of her mind in the presence of Effingham, but had always failed in her attempts. She had yet to learn that love, once seemingly repelled by indifference, shrouds itself behind the icy barriers of pride, and lies powerless and wounded, clothing its very existence with secrecy, till the affections it yearns for, are its own. Thus, thus in some hearts lives unrequited love; but in others, it strings the passions on a finer thread, and arousing the dormant energies of the mind to a fearful, yet brilliant vehemence, bids them shine forth in the fitful splendours of sudden and impetuous efforts, to vanquish the heart that bows not to its power.

Elfine did not wonder Effingham had not justly appreciated the character of Ada; she had seen she was regarded by him as a beautiful statue devoid of animation and of feeling; yet she had also hoped that with time the re-

pellent coldness of her manner would have worn off, and her gentle, yet firm and generous nature, revealing itself, have won, in its true light, the heart of Effingham. These hopes were now frustrated; the unforeseen catastrophe at the ball effectually extinguished every feeling that nursed them, and she could only grieve in silence over the hopeless attachment of her cousin, and carefully avoid either to censure or to praise him; for she felt that she could not with sincerity eulogize him on the most trivial accomplishment as she heartily disliked him, and she did not censure because she thought, and justly, that such a course might wound the feelings of Ada. Silence, therefore, was her most proper resort, and thus they scarcely ever spoke of him when by themselves.

But if Ada found peace on the subject which she dreaded with her cousin, it was not so with her father; he often spoke of Everard,—generally in terms of compassion,—and although

he did not again blame his daughter for her supposed refusal, yet it was equally embarrassing for Ada. This Elfine saw, and at length took him to task upon the subject; descanting in no very measured terms, when not in her presence, upon the pride and the indifference she had noticed in his conduct; upholding that Ada was perfectly right in doing what she had done, till at last Mr. Harolde was drawn into an admission that he should not have liked Effingham at all for a son-in-law, had he known him longer; and by degrees he left off speaking of him so continually, to the infinite satisfaction of the two cousins.

CHAPTER IX.

Most beautiful betrayers,
Of the heart's most secret dream,
That kindle into language,
And speak in ev'ry beam ;
You unfold the thought that's straying
In the heart which fain would hide,
Its wishes and its sorrows,
Beneath the veil of pride !

Though the long and drooping lashes
O'er the burning eyeball fall,
Still love there brightly flashes—
'Tis a fire beneath a pall !
And when pride is mounting slowly,
And wrestles into speech,
Still the heart within is lowly,
Still the eye but truth may teach !

" Oh ! I cannot finish it ! " said Elfine, one evening as she sat working at her tambour

frame; "this is the most tiresome flower I have yet attempted. Look at those different shaded silks, Ada—I shall never be able to sort them,—there is scarcely anything I dislike more than a long, disagreeable piece of work."

"I certainly agree with you," replied Ada, looking up from the table at which she was sitting; "but it was only the other day I heard you exclaiming in rapture upon the hope of soon beginning that very rose."

"Ah! then I did not know how difficult it was to shade," said Elfine, poutingly; "and now I want some of your patience, Ada."

"Can I assist you, Miss Harolde?" said Charles Lennox, who was sitting near her, talking to Mr. Harolde, and who had become a frequent visiter at the Hall.

"You assist me!" answered Elfine, in a tone of the utmost contempt—"you assist me! No, no, I thank you; I must be reduced, indeed, to the greatest need if I requested your help."

"Nay, I only meant to sort the silks," said

Charles; "it does not require great talent for that, so you may safely trust me."

"No, no, no, no,—I will not," replied Elfine, and she gathered her work closer to her—"I will not let any one touch them but Ada, and she being at present engaged, I will await her leisure."

"Then I have nothing more to urge," said Charles; "yet I hope that as you have refused me one favour you will not another."

"What is it?" said Elfine. "I never answer yes, without I know the grounds on which I do so."

"Will you sing?"

"Will I sing?—certainly not. Do you not remember what I said the last time I did?"

"No, I really do not."

"Oh! your memory is a very convenient one—is it not, Ada? Ada was present, Mr. Lennox, and she recollects, I dare say, what it was!"

Ada smiled, and said—

"Mr. Lennox wishes to evade your question, Elfine."

"Yes! I see very clearly that he does; but nevertheless I shall not forget his promise to oblige us with a song, the first time he asked me for one."

"It was a forced engagement on my part, you must acknowledge, Miss Harolde," said Charles, laughing, "and therefore you must be merciful, and not mention the claim you have upon me."

"But I will. My disposition is not at all merciful in such cases."

"Then I must appeal to a more impartial judge," said Charles; "Miss Ada Harolde, am I bound in honor to perform this reluctantly given promise?"

"No," answered Ada—"for I rather think it was Elfine herself who partly composed it."

"How can you say so!" exclaimed Elfine.
"Oh, Ada! it is very provoking of you—I particularly wish to hear Mr. Lennox sing."

"But when I tell you that I cannot—that the croaking of the raven is not more discordant than my voice, you would not have me make myself ridiculous, would you? Besides, I could not give you any real pleasure."

"There, there, now you are becoming serious I have done—of all things I most detest gravity."

"That is not true, Elfine," said Ada.

"Not true!" replied Elfine, colouring; "I beg, Mr. Lennox, will believe me rather than you. Do you think I would have stopped him in the beginning of so much wisdom had I a taste that way inclined?"

"You are sometimes whimsical," said Ada, quietly.

"And you are sometimes very treacherous," answered Elfine, laughing; "but, Ada, say no more, else you will betray a woman's chief secret."

"And what is that?" said Ada.

"Her character. Be silent, therefore, as I do not wish mine to be known."

"By whom?" asked Charles; "if you mean by me, let me assure you I know it already."

"I believe you," said Elfine, with a smile of incredulity.

"You may, indeed," answered Charles, "for I know it thoroughly."

"I defy you to the proof! Older acquaintances than you do not know me as I really am, how then can you?"

"That I need not tell—thus far I will: I have studied the characters of women in their different lights and shades, and I know them all more or less."

"Do you know Ada's?" asked Elfine, laughingly.

"Yes!" said Charles.

There was a pause; and Ada looked up for a moment and smiled.

"Tell me mine," said Elfine at length.

"You must excuse me," answered Charles,
"but I dare not."

"Then you must have formed a very bad
opinion of me, if you do not!"

"No, no—quite the contrary, but—"

"But?"

"But you have—"

"But I have?"

"I will not go on."

"Then I must finish it for you—but I have
faults. Is not that it?"

Charles smiled.

"Yes, I am right. Do not be afraid, however; if I have faults I can bear the mention of them—pray proceed; and then I will tell you yours afterwards."

"I will proceed then; for this much I know: I have no cause to dread your displeasure, as you are perfectly good-natured—pardon me; but I must speak in plain words."

"That is a compliment, I suppose, to soften me for what is to follow—go on."

“ You are generous—”

“ Am I?”

“ But you are proud.”

“ Oh!”

“ And capricious.” And Charles paused.

“ Is that all?” said Elfine, with a disappointed air. “ You have not told me one fault as yet.”

“ Not one fault! Were not the two last points in your character faults?”

“ Do you mean pride and capriciousness? Oh! I never reckon them as such. Pride—proper pride I mean—often prevents us doing many foolish things, and I consider it one of my best qualities.”

“ And capriciousness?”

“ I never allowed I had that failing.”

“ Your words inferred as much.”

“ Well, if I have, it is a very agreeable failing after all; constancy in everything is nonsense.”

"Nonsense! what are your particular exceptions?"

"I do not understand you."

"What are your particular exceptions to the maxim of constancy in everything is nonsense?"

"Here is one: suppose if I were to plait my hair in the same manner for ever, would not that be nonsense?"

"I really do not know; but constancy in the subject of our present conversation would be so."

"Dare you object to it?—everything a lady says to a gentleman is sense."

"Ought to be sense."

"Is sense. How teasing you are! I could punish you; but I will not, because I wish a true answer to a question I am going to ask you, and a little indulgence will perhaps forward my views. If you can, Mr. Lennox, as you say, so thoroughly fathom a woman's feel-

ings, through what means do you acquire that knowledge?"

"By watching the expression, more or less defined, of the eye."

"Of the eye?"

"Yes!"

"But sometimes," said Ada, suddenly, "there is a self-command even over the eye itself."

"Rarely. The eye," answered Charles, "while every feature of the face, and every muscle of the body are mute and motionless beneath the power of self-control, alone speaks; the eye, when the lips refuse utterance to the rich and generous feelings of the soul, or when they are silent by constrained effort, alone tells of the heart swelling with deep emotion though the brow may be calm, and the cheek be coloured with the same unvaried hue—and how beautiful is the language of its revealings! There is a light in the eye that speaks to the

truth of its expression. Is not the look of the guilty cast down before the glance of the innocent? Does it not shrink consciously beneath the lids that shroud it?—for the eye cannot lie when under the dominion of passion, and though the lips may be taught deceit, the mirror of the soul, where the good and evil urgings of our nature are shadowed, retains its truth, and faithfully depicts our every thought. How truly does the eye express the deep sorrow of a heart struggling with the pride that would overwhelm it—” and he glanced unconsciously towards Ada—“ how softly yet how sadly does it tell the tale of the broken hearted, of the penitent—how fervently does it speak in prayer! How wild is the glance of hatred and of rage lurking beneath the darkening light of its flash!—and the madness of remorse that alternately clouds it with tears, or dries it with the fever-scorch of despair! It is in the eye alone that I read the characters of those whom

I seek to know ; for the eye alone conceals not, for a moment, the true feelings of the heart from the glance of the observant."

Scarce had he finished speaking ere he met the eyes of Elfine bent with unfeigned astonishment on him, as clasping her little hands together with a gesture of surprise, she exclaimed—

" Oh Ada ! what shall we do?—he can read our hearts as plainly as I can my sampler. Oh ! you are very disagreeable, indeed you are !" said she turning to Charles.

Ada had listened with a careless air to the commencement of his singular rhapsody ; but gradually her features expressed the growing interest she felt, and pushing the drawing on which she was employed away, she pressed her hand upon her forehead, as if it pained her.

" Yours is a strange system to pursue," said she to Charles, and she thought of his presence at her last farewell to Effingham, " it

is a new, but not altogether an infallible one."

"Yes, yes," said Elfine, quickly, "you must allow that you are sometimes at fault. For instance, I am always laughing—at least you never saw me otherwise—but do you think I am always so?—do you suppose——"

She stopped.

"Do I suppose though smiles in general heighten the rich lustre of your eyes that they can express no other feeling? No, no,—false, false would be my theory if such were its conclusions. Your character, though a difficult one, I grant you, to unravel, is unravelled by me, and though you may deceive others by the careless gaiety of your smile, I attach to its ever fitful radiance far deeper passions, than those which attend the quiet smile of peace. Yours is not a smile of peace."

"Not a smile of peace!"

"No—do you not feel at times, when in the midst of enjoyment, when every wish of your

heart for the moment is gratified, an increasing uneasiness of mind, a yearning for you know not what—a fearfulness for the future? Is it not so? Do you not feel what I express?”

“Yes!” answered Elfine, reluctantly, as if she had been only drawn into an admission of the truth by a wish to know more, “but how could you know it?”

“By the very smile with which you would have deceived me. In the moments of your most reckless joyousness, when the heart and the soul seemed lost in the excitement that was gathering within you, I have watched a shade of sadness dim the light within your eye, though the laugh was echoing from your lips, and called forth corresponding merriment from those around you—that shade was the shade of thought; the contrast, an emblem of the variability of your nature.”

“You have studied me well,” said Elfine, with a constrained air, “but yet in some points you may be mistaken. Yes,” she continued,

with an effort to recover her former gaiety, "yes—there are points on which you may be mistaken; they are those, you have but just now so eloquently described—and thus your labour is lost, you see, alas! alas!"

"Not so—I trust not to your words, Miss Harolde;" said Charles, "even now you feel that all I have said is truth; believe me, I have not studied woman for nought."

And he fixed his eyes half seriously, half smilingly upon her face, until the colour mounted to her very temples, as she turned away in confusion, and busied herself with her work.

"Mr. Lennox," said Ada, who was still thinking of the parting scene between Effingham and herself, "Mr. Lennox, you, who can so readily fathom our thoughts and feelings, can you tell me mine?"

"Do not ask him that, Ada," said Elfine, hastily; and the look of Charles seemed to express the same.

"Can you tell me mine?" repeated Ada; but it was not in so firm a voice as when she had first asked the question; a painful curiosity urged her on, and she dreaded an answer; for she saw in the look of Charles that he knew more than he would wish to avow, and the consciousness of this coloured her cheeks with a deeper blush than they had ever yet worn.

"Pardon me, Miss Harolde," said Charles forcing a laugh, "but I cannot; I generally undertake long and tedious tasks, and rarely bestow any pains upon those I can accomplish easily. Your cousin's disposition seemed to me the most difficult to understand, and therefore, I chose it for my first study, leaving yours, which I deemed clear and intelligible at a glance, for some future time. You must excuse me then, if it is not at present in my power to gratify your wish."

"You can," thought Elfine, earnestly looking at him; but she said nothing.

"After Mr. Lennox having thus uncourtously avowed his neglect of me," said Ada, whose fears had now surmounted her curiosity, "I certainly shall not trouble him again with my suit."

"What are you all chattering about?" said Mr. Harolde, awaking from a comfortable doze on the sofa, "there is Charles laughing, Ada smiling, and Elfine—why, Elfine, you are the only one not enjoying yourself—how are you so serious?"

"Ah, why indeed, dear uncle!" sighed Elfine, piteously, "it is all Mr. Lennox's fault; I thought he was a poor harmless mortal like myself, bestowing no pains on anything but his long light hair, which in general curls very beautifully;" and she laughed as she saw Charles colour deeply at her words, for she wished with a woman's malice to have some slight revenge upon him for the uneasiness he had previously caused her to feel, "but uncle, uncle, lo! he is a magician, and understands

our wishes and our feelings better than we do ourselves. I dare say, he will tell me directly what dress I shall put on to-morrow, though at present I have not decided myself upon that momentous question; and I am sure he will not deny my request to be enlightened upon a subject which he seems to have studied with so much success."

As she spoke, she glanced contemptuously at the exquisite evening dress which Charles wore; and he, who was keenly alive to raillery though he would never own it, retrenched himself behind that cold and affected indifference, that had so often awakened the ridicule of Effingham.

Dangling a little silver scent-bottle, which he took from his waistcoat-pocket in his hand, he answered in a strain that suited the character she had thrust upon him—

"Damsel of the brightly beaming eye! it is not on subjects so trivial as the one which thou

hast chosen that the secrets of Futurity are scanned by the glance of their interpreter. Ill-judged was the question thou didst propose, therefore cease to importune; for silent as the grave is the voice of the wizard unto thee!"

And he slipped the ring to which the flacon was attached on his finger; then parting the long flaxen ringlets that shaded his face, he seemed to examine with attention the delicate chase-work upon it.

"Ah! you brave me then," thought Elfine, and she gazed for a moment or two in silence, as he twisted the little ornament about in his hand with an affected langour that irritated her to an excessive degree, "but I will triumph come what may. Oh! pray, Mr. Lennox," continued she, "give me my flacon—where, where did you find it?—how careless I must have been! Pray give it to me—I did not know that I had lost it."

"Your flacon, Miss Harolde?—pardon me, it is mine."

"Yours? ah! you may well smile! you cannot long persist in that untruth."

Charles did not answer; but pointed to her own bottle appended to her side by a chain fastened *à la châtelaine*.

"No!" exclaimed Elfine, opening her large, dark eyes in well feigned astonishment, "it cannot be! impossible! it is yours then! Are you subject to fainting fits?" continued she, in a tone of earnest inquiry, marking meanwhile a small red spot that was gathering on the cheek of Charles; then checking herself, "Excuse me, I forgot—yes, I have often noticed how pale you sometimes are—I hope you do not feel unwell at present—I fear a faintness is coming on—how your cheek flushes! now red, now pale,—uncle, uncle, look to Mr. Lennox."

And she stopped in mock alarm, and turned with a beseeching air to Mr. Harolde, who answered in a tone of thorough surprise.

"Fainting fit! pale! why, Elfine, his face is as crimson as yonder sofa covering—he is in

very good health—are you not, Charles?”

“Miss Harolde,” replied Mr. Lennox, haughtily, as he rose from his chair, and passed his hand across his deeply flushed brow. “Miss Harolde is an excellent actress.”

“Ah! how weak his voice sounds!” said Elfine, her lips quivering with laughter, though she strove to maintain her self-possession.

“You would make me ridiculous,” said Charles, smiling in spite of himself.

“Ridiculous! what mean you? No ridicule ought to be attached to the infirmities of human nature; it is only where the mind betrays an acquired weakness that I see grounds for rail-lery,—she glanced with a half serious, half comic expression of countenance at the scent bottle, “in you the case is very different,—if you are subject to fainting fits, it is all very right and proper that you should always take some aromatic salts about with you, nothing can be more necessary or judicious.”

“Oh! I see, I must bear your displeasure

patiently," said Charles affectedly, "but allow me to observe that this despised ornament,"—here he twisted the chain from round the stopper, thereby causing it to emit the rich perfume which it contained, "is a most necessary accompaniment to an evening toilette."

"For a lady," said Elfine.

"For a gentleman," rejoined Charles, "Does not the fragrant odour generally confined within it, relieve the spirits when oppressed?"

"Of course," answered Elfine, with an ironical smile.

"Then," continued Charles, with an increasing lassitude of manner, as he watched the contemptuous expression of her countenance, "then, perhaps you have felt in society when overpowered by the insipid conversation of those around you, great relief from inhaling these perfumes?"

"No,—never. Perhaps, you have experi-

enced that feeling this evening?—well, you do look rather exhausted.”

This was an answer that Charles was perfectly unprepared for, and it was with some warmth he exclaimed :

“ How can you speak thus—you, whose every word is fascination !”

“ Fascination,” repeated Elfine, “ you mean the fascination of the rattlesnake that gazes on its victim till it dies.”

And she raised her dark and sparkling eyes to his face with a smile.

“ Yes !” answered Charles, construing her words into a different sense than that for which they were meant. “ Yes ! such is your power, and such is the fate of those who gaze too long upon your perfect beauty.”

Elfine’s eyes were cast down, and the silken lashes that veiled them lay upon a crimsoned cheek, but she only answered, “ Ah !” in an indifferent tone, and laughed.

"Do you know, Mr. Lennox," said Elfine a little while afterwards, "I had formed a very different opinion of you to the one which this evening's conversation has made me entertain."

"Had you?" said Charles, "and pray, what kind of a character did you give me?"

"Not so strange a one as is really your own."

"What mean you?"

"Are you not a compound of nonsense and sense, of passion and indolence, of foolishness and wit?—and is not that a strange mixture,—and is not that a strange character?"

"No doubt," answered Charles, rising and taking leave, "yet you have allowed me more good qualities than I am known to possess. As for my follies"—

"There is one gone already," exclaimed Elfine, as she watched the little scent bottle drop from his hand, and strike against the fender, where it was dashed to pieces.

"I accept the omen Miss Harolde;" replied Charles, and he gathered the glittering frag-

ments of silver and of glass in his hand and laid them before her, "thus may all my faults disappear beneath your frown."

"Mr. Lennox has an exquisite talent for flattery, uncle," said Elfine.

"So I perceive, my love," answered Mr. Harolde, "although he has never complimented me, either upon my perfect beauty, or the fascination of my voice."

CHAPTER X.

What is love ? A source of passion
Once in vogue, now out of fashion.
Who would love in days like these ?
Just to flirt, and just to please,
For a moment, or an hour
Now-a-days is all the power
That a woman's eyes will give,—
Ah ! in what sad times we live !

Faithful love, and lovers' woe
Openly are laughed at now ;
Gold and gems attract the fair
Braided in her shining hair,
Tell they not of heart as cold,
As the joys wealth ever sold ?
Truth and love they may not give—
Ah ! in what sad times we live !

“Elfine,” said Mr. Harolde one day to his niece, “you received a letter from your brother this morning, did you not?”

"Yes, uncle," answered she, in a tone of ill concealed vexation.

"Well, my dear, where is he now? and what does he say?"

"There is the letter," said Elfine, handing it over to him.

"No, no, my love, I do not wish to read it; besides, I have not my glasses here, so if you will tell me the contents that will do as well."

"He is in London now," replied Elfine.

"In London! Why, he was at Marseilles five days ago! When is he coming to see us?"

"Not just yet. He writes that he must go to Bosherton House to overlook the new modelling of the grounds."

"New modelling of the grounds, indeed! He had much better leave them as they are—what else?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing! Well, I would not thank Edward for his letter then, if I were you."

"Nor do I mean to, uncle. He says he has

no time to write more—no time! how then do I find leisure—I, who am engaged all day—to write to him? And now, uncle, he always sends such short, dry letters; you know he used to make us laugh by his agreeable nonsense; but alas! that hath passed away, as passeth the sunbeam from the waters that used to sparkle in its light, and his pen now traces solemn complaints about the weather that are spun out to an intolerable length, so as to cover the very exquisitely fashionable paper on which he writes.” And she held up to the light a small note which she took from a regular sized envelope. “Oh yes!” she continued, as she saw Mr. Harolde take the envelope in his hand, “Oh yes! he still continues to form his letters to the same size, just like a nurse giving a crying child a large bonbon box with but one little bonbon inside. Oh! most kind and most judicious of brothers!”

Mr. Harolde laughed at the warmth with which she spoke. “Ah! Elfine, Elfine,” he

said, "did you always expect then to receive as long letters from him as when he first parted from us?"

"To be sure, uncle—what has he to do? Till within a year of the present time he used to write to me as of old, gay, sparkling letters, full of news and nonsense—what else has he to do when away from us? The plantations at Bosherton cannot employ all his time, though he talks so much of them; and then, uncle, to think that he has not once visited the Hall—not once seen us since his return from France; and he has been nearly a year in England. It is too disgraceful of him!—what can you say to that?"

"Nothing, Elfine, but that I am sorry Edward is so changed in his affection towards us. Still, my dear," continued the old gentleman kindly, "let us try to excuse him; young men do not like the country except at the sporting season."

"Then why does he stay so long at Bosherton?"

"That you must ask him yourself, my dear ; but never mind, Elfi, never mind, perhaps it is only a passing fancy, and he will like the Hall and its inmates twice as well afterwards."

And Mr. Harolde kissed her affectionately as he walked away, and Elfine with a sigh threw aside the letter, and fixed her tambour frame for working, and poutingly passed the morning away by inwardly reproaching Edward with forgetting those ties of affection which, during childhood, had bound them so strongly together ; for Elfine loved her brother well, and was jealous of his regard !

"You may say what you like Sir Francis, and reason as long as you will, but you shall never persuade me that a gentleman loves more fervently and truly than a lady."

Such was the answer Sir Francis Ellerton received one day from Elfine, relative to an assertion of his to the contrary effect.

"Hush !" replied Sir Francis, smiling, "hush ! let me try to convince you that we

may and do love as deeply and as truly as women—wherefore should you doubt us?”

“Doubt you? I do not doubt for one moment upon the subject; it is on certainties that I have built my opinion.”

“To proceed more intelligibly in our discourse,” said Sir Francis, “suppose we cite instances of the depth of affection in either sex. Miss Harolde? Facts have more weight than argument.”

“Agreed. Pray proceed—Ada, and Mr. Lennox, you will be the umpires, will you not?”

Ada and Charles replied in the affirmative.

“Then will you begin?” said Elfine to Sir Francis.

“Will you not favour me first with an example of faithfulness in a woman?”

“Just as you like—here is one: A young lady and a young gentleman had been engaged to each other from their infancy, and the affection between was mutual; but untoward cir-

circumstances prevented the completion of the match, and the gentleman was forced to seek a distant land, with very little chance of ever seeing his native shore again. At the moment of parting he gave back to the lady all the vows she had plighted to him, and bade her forget one, who till that day had been considered a part of her existence; but the lady wept, and answered: 'It needs not to tell me to forget you—why should I take back the love I have given, not for a time only, but for ever? Are you poor?—I am rich,—stay in the land of our fathers, and bless me with your presence, and your love. Heed not the tongues of the slanderers,—I know your worth—I trust in your honour—Arthur, dearest Arthur, the only tie that binds me to peace and happiness you would break—stay with me! Throw me not back on my cold-hearted relations,—am I not an orphan, and alone? You, and you only will I live for—stay with me!' But her passionate pleading was of no avail, and he departed.

"Years passed by, but still the heiress was unmarried, though endowed with youth, beauty and riches; and time but cast a softened grace upon her lovely features. Many wondered at her fate, and deemed her cold-hearted—alas! they knew not the mourning spirit within!

"Years passed by, and the wanderer returned, poor and maimed; and those who gazed upon him knew not in the bowed form before them, the once gay and handsome Arthur D—; yet one, the loving and the loved, needed not the mention of his name to recognize him;—and when with his hand clasped in hers, he heard the blessings that were flowing from her lips, and saw the joy that was brightening in her pale blue eyes, what cared he for the false hearted ones who turned from him with a sneer?

"And he was happy; but the seeds of death had been sown,—the grave was ready—he had returned but to die; and soon the bride of a

few weeks knelt beside the deathbed of her husband.

"He was dead—yet she lived long years of sorrow; the spirit of the mourner threw not off the load that oppressed it, and death alone stilled the heart of the bereaved one.

"There, Sir Francis, I am sure you cannot find an instance of truer affection; where is the gentleman who could have loved as my heroine did?"

The sudden transition of tone with which Elfine concluded her tale, and the laughing manner in which she addressed Sir Francis, might have sorely puzzled an ordinary observer as to the real depth of those feelings which had actuated her to impart to her narration the impassioned eloquence, with which she had spoken. Many might have deemed that she acted her part admirably; but Charles, who held the clew whereby he could unravel the intricate windings of her mind, saw that it was not so, and traced the sudden change to its right

source. He remarked that she began in a short, quick manner, as if wishing to bring the tale readily to a conclusion; but soon he perceived her eye wander from Sir Francis on whom it had been previously fixed as if to enforce the argument she upheld, and her words came more slowly forth; he saw her imagination dwelt upon the scenes she spoke of, until her speech assumed the reality of passion. Elfine Harolde had scarcely seemed to remember that there were listeners; her voice melted to the softest tones of supplication, and died in the last effort of despair; every feature spoke a language as intelligible as that which flowed from her lips; and it was not until the last word of her tale had sunk to silence, that she seemed to recover from the emotion that she had betrayed, and as if ashamed of it, challenged Sir Francis for an answering anecdote with a sudden levity of manner which to him was perfectly startling and inexplicable.

“My tale is a brief one;” said Sir Francis,

after a silence of some moments, "it is that of a gentleman who slighted by the woman he loved, suddenly disappeared from among his numerous friends, and making over his property to his next of kin, retired, upon a trifling annuity, to a small island where he lived till the end of his days. What say you to that, Miss Harolde?"

"Only that I think he must have been mad, and that the malady showed itself upon the contradiction of his most earnest wishes. I always thought that disappointed affection ennobled the character of the sufferer, but it seemed to have lowered that of your hero; for indulging in a sudden freak of passion, he resigned the riches that a kind Providence had given him, and with them the means of doing good to thousands of his fellow creatures. I can imagine a man bowed down with grief, while yet in the prime of youth, by a hopeless passion but then I always picture him as living more for others than himself; dispensing with calm

resignation his wealth amidst the helpless and the poor. Reasoning as I do that his happiness was destroyed early in life, where could he possibly find relief from the sorrow rending his heart, save in administering to the necessities of others? In seeing the faces of the needy, the broken-hearted, and the dying brighten at his approach, would he not feel a balm steal over his wounded spirit? would he not bless Heaven for having prolonged a life, which perhaps in some rash moment of despair, he wished had never been? Such a character would command my utmost veneration; but the one you have described my utmost contempt! I cannot understand a man so utterly selfish as to abandon himself to a grief that could admit of no alleviation by creating the happiness of his brethren; nor feel an increase of sorrow when viewing their distresses."

"And are these your sentiments on the subject?" said Sir Francis, as he watched her flashing eyes and glowing cheeks. "Are these

your sentiments? Strange, strange, that one so fraught with nonsense and with whim, should think with so much justice and decision!"

"I never heard a worse turned compliment;" laughed Elfine, "if you wished to appear polite, and gain my favour, why did you not leave out nonsense and whim? Take a lesson from Mr. Lennox, who is the most accomplished flatterer I know. In eulogizing my wisdom he would never have mentioned such drawbacks to it?"

"Will you never spare me, Miss Harolde?" said Charles, smiling.

"Did you not like my calling you a flatterer?—I thought it was the highest and most acceptable compliment I could pay you."

"Yes, as a compliment it certainly would have been so, if by compliments you mean polite untruths."

"Ah!" said Elfine, slightly drawing her teeth together, you always wrench my words to your own purposes. But to return to our

former subject, Sir Francis, you have not yet convinced me that a lady's heart is more volatile than a gentleman's; as yet we are equal, for the love of both our examples lasted until death; though I rather suspect that in your case it was upheld by anger and pride. But then, love is the parent of many passions, and so let it pass; yet only see the difference in the conduct of each,—how trusting and how faithful was my gentle heroine, and what a gloomy misanthrope your hero became! Was it love, divine love, the purifier of the human heart, the softener of its passions that could thus make him flee from his kindred and his friends, and render him a very savage in the midst of civilization!"

"Yes, yes," answered Charles Lennox, "at times love turns to hate when unrequited."

"Ah! there," exclaimed Elfine, in exultation, "Mr. Lennox has admitted a fact which you, Sir Francis, would not; those who hate, cannot love, that is very clear; and so the

gentleman who suffered so deeply from the effects of a disappointed affection must have been evidently, in the latter part of his life, under the dominion of hate. Yes, Sir Francis, you need not smile and shake your head, I maintain that he was so; I do not say but that he might have loved, but that love was over when he took to the singular life you described. Let me ask you one question—did he at any time after his disappointment ever mention, with tenderness, the fair lady who had thus unsettled his reason?"

"Why, I must say, he generally spoke of her with anger."

"There, there," cried Elfine, joyously clapping her hands, "is not that a perfect, exemplification of my argument? You are vanquished, Sir Francis, you are vanquished."

"Not so," answered he, smiling, "you know not the wiles of love—perhaps, at the moment when he seemed the most angered against the woman he loved he was thinking of

her with the deepest tenderness. Yes, I have seen the tear in his eye, even while he was accusing her of cold-heartedness and cruelty. Those who knew him not as well as I did, might have thought as you do, Miss Harolde, that hate had superseded love ; but it was not so ; one of his gentle nature could not thus change his very being, and though he seemed wrapped in misanthropy, his heart was still open to every call of distress."

"And of what use were these feelings," urged Elfine, "if he lived apart from the world?"

"He lived apart from the world," said Sir Francis, "but there were those who sought him out, whom fortune favoured not ; and to those he ministered, and to those he gave of the little that he had reserved for himself."

"Ah !" said Elfine, half unconsciously, "and she did not love him !"

There was a silence of some minutes, which Charles Lennox broke, by saying—

"Well, Miss Harolde, do you still hold the same opinion?"

"Do not tease me," was the answer he received, "what need have you to know?"

"It was chiefly with a view to ascertain your decision upon the subject that I have waited thus long. I came, Miss Harolde, to take leave; I had a letter from my uncle this morning which requested me to meet him at Southampton within a few days of its receipt."

"Indeed!" answered Elfine, in an indifferent tone, just like if she felt obliged to say something, but had not the slightest interest upon the subject; whereas she entirely disapproved of his departure, and muttered to herself—"How disagreeable!"

Charles was not quite pleased with her reply, so he continued—

"I regret leaving this place; everything seems so familiar to me now—so much like home; for I know every lane and every walk

hereabouts. I wish my uncle would fix upon this part of Kent for his residence; but I am afraid he will not, and so I may never see it again."

Elfine guessed what was passing in his mind, and answered in a very quiet tone—

"Most likely not—people soon forget the most enchanting spots; but then who can resist the love of change? Not I for one."

"The love of change!" he replied, "it is not the love of change that calls me hence; I hope you do not think so, Miss Harolde?—else you must consider me as being very ungrateful for the many delightful hours I have spent in the society of Harolde Hall."

Elfine laughed.

"Say you do not consider me ungrateful," said Charles, in a lower tone, and more earnestly than before.

"Of what use would it be for me to say so?" said Elfine, "perhaps, I should not tell the truth if I answered rather politely. Ask

Ada for her opinion—there you will be sure to have a kind reply, for she is always the friend of the distressed—are you not, Ada?”

“Yes, of those who do not understand your system of teasing,” answered Ada, with a smile, “but Mr. Lennox does not heed you, Elfine.”

“Not heed me, indeed! Is that true, Mr. Lennox?”

“True?—how can you think so? I expected to find a friend in Miss Ada Harolde, but I see she is my enemy as well as you; though, I acknowledge, a more open and generous one.”

“Why so?” asked Elfine.

“Because you, under the semblance of friendship, sometimes act a very treacherous part, indeed; she does not.”

And Charles laughed, and fixed his eyes on Elfine.

Now, Elfine knew very well that Charles was

looking at her, though her eyes were stedfastly bent upon her work; she felt it was so, and she strove to suppress a rising blush that was colouring her cheek.

And she did suppress it, before he discovered the slight suffusion of blood that spread over her face.

Whether Charles was disappointed, I cannot say; most likely he wished to see some emotion visible upon her countenance; but as he did not, he walked from her, and made his several adieus, reserving hers for the last; a rather critical point in manœuvring, for the lady is sometimes offended by such a marked distinction, and does not understand it—which by-the-bye, is a thing most easy to be understood: for, who would not sympathize with the lover, who after pressing within his hand the white and fairy fingers of his mistress, must efface that ever rapturous touch by grasping the hands of a whole host of indifferent people afterwards? It is not a thing to be commented on

for one moment; therefore, fair ladies, be ye not offended if your lovers leave their adieus to you for the last. Fancy what must be the pleasure of the gentleman as he strolls homewards, in caressing his own large and clumsy looking hand—(gentlemen's hands are clumsy—did you ever see them hem a pocket-handkerchief?) to continue—in caressing his own large and clumsy looking hand, thinking meanwhile of the lovely little fingers that had rested upon it with a soft trembling, as if to say—

“ Oh! don't forget me!”

“ And was hers the last touch?” says the gentleman, “ ah! rapturous moment!”

Yes! kiss your own hand, my dear sir;—'tis a moonlight night—a fit night for sentimental nonsense—and nobody sees you! Hallowed be the salute!

But where is Elfine all this time? Elfine was not one of those foolish ladies who do not understand the above mentioned man-

œuvre; she perfectly comprehended it, and in silence awaited the last good-bye of Charles.

He came—he put out his hand, and she put out hers; he advanced his a little further, and she placed hers within his at once. Strange to say Charles did not like this; he wanted to see more confusion in her manner; but unhappily for his inquisitiveness there was none.

“Yes! you are very inquisitive,” thought Elfine, “but you shall not see that I like you!”

“A perfect coquette!” muttered Charles to himself; yet he contrived to hold her hand in his during the adieu; while she did not attempt to withdraw it, but let it lay there perfectly motionless.

“Worse and worse!” thought Charles. “Well, good bye, Miss Harolde,” said he, for the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh time, “I hope we shall soon meet in town.”

Ah! then indeed, the little hand felt a slight thrill run through it, and Charles felt it too; to be sure, the tiny fingers were instantly withdrawn from his grasp, and Elfine turned coldly away from him; but he did not care for that; he knew he had a wilful one to deal with.

It was certainly a very strange circumstance that Elfine should run to the window directly after the door was closed upon Charles, to see whether it was a moonlight night—was it not?—particularly as she could have ascertained the fact with very little trouble, by merely raising her eyes to the reflection of the moon, which then lit up the apartment in which they were sitting. Yet what was still more strange, when she came back to her seat by the fire, there was a deep blush, and an air of vexation upon her countenance that no one could account for. Ada and Sir Francis looked; but as looking could not solve the mystery, and neither liked to ask the cause of her discom-

posure, it was passed by in silence, and in a couple of hours was forgotten by all present. Perhaps, after all, it was only the glow of the fire that had enriched her complexion.

CHAPTER XI.

But Nature never framed a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

"ELFINE," said Ada, one evening when the two cousins were sitting together in the drawing-room by themselves, "Elfine," continued she, in a low and broken voice, "I am engaged—engaged to become the wife of Sir Francis Ellerton."

The astonishment of Elfine was obviously

painted upon her countenance, although she did not speak until the silence became too painful to bear, and then she only echoed the last words of Ada—

“ Sir Francis Ellerton !”

“ Yes,” said her cousin, after a short pause, “ to you I may speak freely, Elfine ; I am engaged, irrevocably engaged. It is now three months since the departure of Effingham,” added she, conquering the emotion that had given a slight tremor to her voice, as she proceeded, “ and in that time I have found leisure to examine myself and to quell every hope of regaining him. “ Yes, Elfine, I will acknowledge to you that even after that night which parted us for ever, I thought, I dreamed, I hoped, to force Effingham to love me. My dreams were built upon the hope of meeting him in town ; and then I meant to employ every talent, every accomplishment I possess to captivate him. I know that I am beautiful—it were idle to deny it to you, Elfine, speaking

as plainly and as truthfully as I do now—I know that I am beautiful ; but I also know that the coldness of my manners is forbidding : I meant to subdue it, and to mould myself anew. Such were my day-dreams—”

“ And such let them still be, dearest Ada ! Oh ! if you would only act what you speak, I would prophesy that ere long Effingham would be at your feet. You do not love Sir Francis ; break your engagement with him—”

“ You speak foolishly,” said Ada, coldly, as she shook the hand of Elfine from off her own, “ I said, such were my day-dreams ; but they lasted not long ;” and her lips curled in scorn at the remembrance, “ reason and pride came in due season, and calmed them ere they grew to the madness of reality. Love was then at its height, and at its despair ; and the utter meanness of those thoughts may be forgiven by the recollection of the tumult of my mind at that period ; though when I was again myself I could not bear to dwell upon them for one

moment, and scorned the weakness of my heart which had bade me nourish them. Elfine, I have never sought nor shunned the addresses of Sir Francis; being of a reserved disposition himself, he read, perhaps, in my demeanour, a silent acquiescence to his wishes, and he offered—and I—and I accepted him.”

“ Oh ! it was rashly, rashly done ! ” exclaimed Elfine.

“ Not so,” replied Ada, “ I weighed the motives well that urged me to it; he loves me—”

“ But you do not love him,” said Elfine.

“ No ! ” answered Ada, with a clear, firm voice, yet with a strange light in her dark blue eyes, “ no ! I love Effingham.”

“ Then, think how you wrong Sir Francis—”

“ I love Effingham,” interrupted Ada, “ with all my pride I cannot efface his semblance from my mind—and why ? Because I have not the duties requisite to force me to forget him. But, Elfine, when I am the wife of

another, every thought that lingers upon Effingham will be guilt—guilt to be shunned and dreaded; I shall feel my secret love a deadly wrong unto my husband, and were my very life to pay for the struggle I would root it from my heart! And in time, Elfine, and in time, I must love Sir Francis—is he not wise, and good, and mild? Do I not respect and esteem him now?—and will not those feelings grow into a more tender affection when Effingham is forgotten?"

"Say not so, say not so, Ada," replied Elfine, sadly, "I would rather hear you say, you never could love Sir Francis, than listen to these calm calculations upon the reverse. I know you—better, perhaps, than you do yourself—and believe me; the step you intend to take will cost you endless hours of misery. I am young and gay, and careless, but I can think rightly: pride has misled you, Ada; your heart is with Effingham; but he does not know it—he never can know it—then why will

you thus hurriedly give your hand to Sir Francis Ellerton? If you will not break your engagement, protract it; and in the meanwhile strive against your love for Effingham."

"No!" answered Ada, "I will not. Did not I say there was but one remedy for it?"

"And that is a bad one," said Elfine.

"I care not. Would you have me pass my whole life in pining for one who refused me?"

And the brow of Ada Harolde flushed crimson at the thought.

"I said not that," replied Elfine, "it were foolishness to think of it; all I wish you to do, if you utterly reject the idea of that sort of acting which alone would conquer Effingham, is to stay sometime ere you decide, ere you are bound for life to a man whom you do not love. Stay awhile; and when this first heat of passion is past, reason calmly with yourself whether you can in conscience fulfil the duties of a wife, while your heart is fast

bound to Effingham. Listen to me, Ada; that love which you think so enduring, so deep, as to require the most severe remedies to eradicate it from its hold, will not cease after your marriage with Sir Francis—'twill be the sealing it there for ever. You say, that every thought which will then linger upon the one you love will be guilt—guilt to be shunned and dreaded—but will the dread of that guilt make you forget Effingham?—Will it not rather force your thoughts to his remembrance by the very prohibition?—and is not the memory and the imagination even more vivid when allied to sin? Ada, with the thought of resolving not to do your husband wrong by remembering the love-dream of your youth, you will do it; for with the dread of such wild thoughts within your mind, will come the recollection of Effingham. But if, ere you become the wife of another, some years had intervened, that love, coupled as it is with no pangs save those of its disappointment, would die away. Ada, with

the talents and the strength of mind which you possess, you could not pass your days in mourning for the love of Effingham; you would be aroused and excited by a thousand incidents around you, and your affection subdued by that firmness of character which is your own; till at last brought to that state of indifference in which you could behold Effingham without one feeling of anger, or of pride, you could, with the consciousness of rectitude, become the wife of Sir Francis Ellerton. Rarely does love live without hope—”

“ So would I crush all hope at once, Elfine,” said Ada, with a bright and tearless eye. “ Did not you tell me sometime past it was better to do so? Do not interrupt me,” continued she, as she saw that Elfine essayed to speak. “ Do not interrupt me—do not urge more reasons upon my bewildered brain, I cannot bear them now—or ever. The sacrifice is offered—my word is with Sir Francis—and I would not recall it; I would not recall it

even if I could—I am glad that it is so. Not another word upon the subject, dearest, kindest Elfine! you have spoken, and I have listened; perhaps, you are right; but my doom is fixed, and cannot be altered—Sir Francis speaks to my father this evening.”

And Elfine saw it was of no use to strive to shake her determination, and she turned from her; not in anger because her counsel was disregarded, but in sorrow as she thought on the self-sought misery of Ada.

“Elfine, kind Elfine,” said the voice of her cousin, “we have idled our time away sadly—sing to me, dearest!”

And she twined her arms around Elfine, and smiled as she spoke; but Elfine would not sing.

“Will you not sing? will you not, Elfine?—then I will.”

And she went to the harp, and sat down beside it; and she sang.

And Elfine listened to the music, and grad-

ually she drew near unto the singer. It was a lively song, and Ada's eyes laughed in the radiance of their light as she proceeded, and her mirth seemed natural—alas! for the falsehood of those smiles!

But the eyes that had so studiously avoided the gaze of Elfine suddenly sought them in their full flash of joyful vehemence; they met it; and Ada burst into tears.

As swiftly did she wipe them away, however; and with a smile she said—

“I played my part well, did I not? Yet at the last I betrayed myself; I am not yet a—yes, a hypocrite!”

And she turned from her, and left the apartment; and Elfine sought not to follow her.

That night Sir Francis spoke with Mr. Harolde, who gave a joyful consent to the match, which was fixed to take place towards the autumn of the year.

Many were the jokes that Mr. Harolde

vented forth on this occasion upon Ada; slyly imputing the refusal of Effingham to this hitherto unforeseen cause; and she bore them well without one change of countenance; sometimes she even smiled. What secret power upheld the weakness of her heart, and crushed the better feelings of her nature? What but the enemy of the good, the wise, and the great—the subtle essence of all evil, when not properly curbed—pride!

CHAPTER XII.

Breathes there the man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land !

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

So ! you're my son ?—a pretty lad, i'faith !
With curling locks, long, fair, and well-conditioned ;
Why now, sirrah, is this your mother's doing,
That from a lively boy, who some years since
I left on England's hardy shore, ye're changed
Into a girl, a pale-faced girl ?

MANUSCRIPT.

“ Ah ! there's no place like England, after all,”
said Colonel Lennox, the night after he had

landed from his long sea voyage, while he was comfortably settled by the side of a large fire, in one of the best hotels at Southampton. And he looked round for the assent of his sister and his nephew who were seated beside him.

"Well, brother," answered Miss Lennox, "that is what you would never acknowledge until this moment. Often and often have I asked you in my letters, did you not long to return to England, and you invariably answered, no."

"Aye, aye, that is what a good many say when they are far away; but when you near the home you love, your feelings become more excited; 'tis like the magnet and the needle, Susan; the closer together, the more powerful the attraction."

"And you did not forget your old sister, James?" said Miss Lennox, her withered, yet still handsome features lighting up with a smile.

"Forget you, Sue! no, no," answered

Colonel Lennox, affectionately; "how could I forget the only person living allied to me by blood! the companion of my younger days—the only soul who cared for me!"

"And Charley, brother, Charley," said Miss Lennox, pointing to her nephew.

"Yes, Charley, sister, Charley," answered he, mimicking her; then turning abruptly round upon Charles, he asked him—

"Do you paint, boy?"

"Paint, sir!" said Charles, in astonishment at the suddenness of the question—"no—I have no taste that way."

"Pshaw! I mean do you paint your face, child?" rejoined Colonel Lennox.

"Of course not, sir," answered Charles—and a deep blush overspread his countenance.

"Aye, so I *now* perceive," was the reply he received; and he felt he was looked at for a moment by his relative with a mixture of contempt and displeasure.

This was not the first time Charles, Lennox

had noticed that he did not stand very high in the consideration of his uncle. At the very moment of meeting he saw the Colonel took a rapid survey of his person, ere he accepted the greeting he proffered; and then it was received with such a coldness of manner that left not a doubt in the mind of Charles, as to the light in which he was regarded by him. Colonel Lennox in truth thought his nephew a thorough coxcomb; and in reply to the various eulogiums of his sister on his prepossessing appearance, only answered evasively upon the subject; reserving his real opinion of the matter for a later period of time, being willing not to damp her spirits amidst the pleasures of his welcome home by any strictures upon his youthful ward.

But to return to our fireside party.

"So you now perceive, James!" echoed Miss Lennox. "Why, 'tis the dear boy's natural complexion, I thought anybody could have seen that."

"To be sure, Susan, to be sure—I wont dispute with you,—

' 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white,
Nature's own cunning hand laid on.'

eh, sister?"

"Well, if I were Charles, brother, I should be very angry with you," said Miss Lennox.

"Ah! no doubt; women are up in a minute; but you see Charles is not out of temper with his foolish old uncle."

"If I could not bear a little raillery, sir," said Charles, joining in the conversation, "my feelings must be as keen as your wit,—which," he muttered to himself, "is rather disagreeable."

"Ah, ha! say you so, child! You should have said as keen as my sword, for I don't know that I was ever accounted very witty," said the old man, turning sharply round upon him, and eyeing him with a scrutinizing glance,

till he added, in an altered tone. "Lord! he's very like his poor mother!"

"Very true, James," responded Miss Lennox, complacently; "and she was the prettiest woman I ever knew."

"Then, perhaps, you reckon your nephew the prettiest lad you ever saw?" said the Colonel.

"Yes, indeed," answered Miss Lennox, with great simplicity—"and so I often tell him."

"Aye, I doubt not; and to some purpose," muttered the old soldier to himself; "a fantastical young fool!" Then added aloud—"Does your aunt often pay you such compliments, Charles?"

"Very often," answered Charles, laughing heartily; for though he was vexed at the abrupt and indirect censures of the Colonel, he could not help being amused at the strangeness of the manner in which they burst forth.

Singular as it may seem, this laugh produced a change in the opinion of his uncle towards

him; for the Colonel reasoned thus: He had always considered coxcombry, vanity, and pride as inseparable; and seeing in his nephew a decided taste for the first of these qualities, he gratuitously gave him the two latter in a very eminent degree. Pride and vanity, indeed, Charles possessed; but not so much so as was supposed by his uncle, whose long formed opinion this laugh entirely disconcerted; for discovering in Charles, whom he expected rather to nettle than to amuse, a portion of good-humour which he had not given him credit for, he suddenly cast all the blame of his seemingly thwarted education upon his sister, exclaiming in a kinder tone—

“ Ah! Sue, Sue, 'tis you who have ruined the boy!” And then quickly changed the subject of the conversation to evade her reply.

But at length the hour of repose came, and the party separated for the night.

The most truly happy of the three was the kind-hearted Miss Lennox, who had not yet

discovered the growing dislike of her brother for Charles, and who was wholly taken up with her joy at his return. The thoughts of both the uncle and nephew were not very agreeable; Colonel Lennox was decidedly disappointed in the expectations he had formed of his long-adopted heir, and Charles felt disposed to dislike one, who could so readily and unpleasantly attack him on his weakest points. He tried to reason himself out of his dislike by remembering the obligations he had towards the Colonel; but it would not do; and in the endeavour he fell asleep.

Two or three days after the above conversation, the Colonel, Miss Lennox, and Charles were walking on the harbour, when the Colonel, who had become more and more disgusted with the foppery and fastidiousness of his nephew, suddenly asked him whether he fenced?

"Yes," answered Charles.

"Passably, I suppose?"

"No," rejoined Charles, with calm noncha-

lance—"well. Aunt, here is your handkerchief—you dropped it."

"Thank you, love!"

"Do you box, Charles?" asked the Colonel.

"I suppose you mean whether I have taken part in any pugilistic exercises?—Yes, sir, I have."

"Humph! let me see your hand."

Charles ungloved it.

"And do you mean to say, nephew, that you can knock a man down with this little, soft, velvety fist?"

"Oh yes! indeed he can, James," interrupted Miss Lennox, I saw him myself, though I was very much shocked at the time. But Walker thoroughly deserved it, I must say, for he was intoxicated, and would not turn the horses as I bid him; (we were going to Mrs. Humphrey's brother,) so Charles in a passion knocked him down, and drove me there himself. I never wished him to learn boxing, but nevertheless he would; and it served him well on

that occasion, I must allow, for the man was so impudent that he offered to strike him. He did strike you, now I think of it, did he not, Charles?"

"Yes, aunt."

"I thought so; but to my knowledge he has never boxed since, so it has been of no further use to him. I was ever against his studying it—such a very ungentlemanly accomplishment as it is."

"Ungentlemanly or not, 'tis a most useful one, Susan; you cannot fight a duel with a common fellow; so the best way to settle an insult received from a person of that sort, is to knock him down at once."

"Those are the very reasons with which Charles half reconciled me to his wish to learn it, brother."

"Oh! he reasons too, does he?" said the Colonel, with a derisive smile. "A most accomplished young gentleman upon my word!—though I suppose he cannot swim?"

"Oh yes! he can, James."

"Why, uncle," said Charles, "do you fancy me your niece?"

"Well yes, nephew, to be plain with you I very often do; those long light ringlets, and childish features—"

"Childish features! oh! brother, look at his moustache!"

Colonel Lennox laughed "That could be taken for false, Sue."

"Then look how tall he is!"

"But his fair complexion?"

"How can the dear child help that?"

"Well, well, I'll say no more—when I go to Wales, he shall come with me, and I hope the sea breezes will embrown that pale soft cheek of his, or give it some freckles."

"Oh horrible!" murmured Charles to himself, "Wales! sea breezes and freckles!" Then aloud, "When do you go, uncle?"

"In three or four days' time."

"So soon!" exclaimed Miss Lennox, "don't you mean to accompany me to London then?"

"Are you going to London, Sue?"

"Why yes, James; we never supposed you would go to Wales directly; indeed, we have engaged lodgings for you in town, so you must not disappoint us."

"As you like, Susan, as you like. I shall not object to a month's detention from my retirement into Wales."

"But why need you go to Wales at all? I see no necessity for it; though you were born a Welshman, that is no reason you should live there; your extraction is not Welsh."

"Good reasoning, Sue; but I love Wales; it is the country of my predilection."

"But my dear brother, think how dull it will be for Charles."

"Ah, ha! Charles—that is the word that winds up your argument, is it? No doubt for a young man of his vivacity and acquirements, 'twill be a mighty dull place."

"Not in the sporting season, sir," inter-

rupted Charles, "give me a gun and a couple of dogs, and I shall be content."

"Town would be pleasanter?" enquired the Colonel in his short, dry manner.

"Of course," said Charles, "but then the country is very delightful for a change; and besides, I should not be always there.

"How know you that?" said the Colonel, quickly.

"Oh! I only modestly hope so, sir," answered Charles, laughingly, willing to avert any ill-omened sentence of despotic authority from his uncle.

"Humph!" said the Colonel, and turned to Miss Lennox, addressing her upon some indifferent subject.

And the dislike of the uncle and nephew towards each other increased; Colonel Lennox thought Charles a fashionable fool of the first order; and he in return deemed his uncle to be a sarcastic and ill-natured old man.

Both were wrong in their premature decisions; the Colonel was thoroughly good-natured at heart, and Charles Lennox had more the appearance of folly than its reality.

CHAPTER XIII.

She is the same I saw on France's shore,—
A dark-eyed girl, of that soft loveliness
Born unto southern climes ; the silken hair,
Black as the winds of death ; the crimson tints
That faintly flush across that clear brown cheek,
Mellowed to a rich loveliness, bespeak
A daughter of the South—the glorious South !
Whose dower is Beauty, and whose breath is Love !

MANUSCRIPT.

I can meet thee with coldness
And gaze on thee now,
As if love ne'er had striven
Beneath that pale brow.

I may weep when in silence—
My weak heart is yet
'Neath the thrall of thy power,
I cannot forget !

Yet I meet thee with coldness,
For my spirit is crush'd
And the throbbing of hope,
Hath for ever been hush'd !

IN about a week's time Colonel Lennox saw himself comfortably settled in London ; and Charles, seeking out his several acquaintances divided his time agreeably between his uncle and his friends. Amongst these he found Effingham still in town, and with him he passed most of the idle hours that lay heavy on his hands, whenever he could prevail upon him to give him his company.

"Well, Charles," said Effingham, one morning as they were sauntering arm in arm up Bond Street, "how do you and your uncle agree now ?"

"Not at all ; just the same as when we first met ; there is decided hostility between us. And yet," sighed Charles, "I cannot be so very self-willed and rebellious, because I owe

him a great deal on the score of gratitude; and that rises to my mind whenever I wish to defy him. But oh! I wish he had remained in India!—for then, being at a distance, and not knowing his real character, I might have liked him, as I suppose I ought to do.”

“As you suppose you ought to do?” said Effingham laughing.

“Why yes,” answered Charles, “you know Everard, he is my guardian; and not only that, but he has been at the expense of my entire education; for though my father left me something it was not much, so that I am still dependent as it were upon him. To be sure, I am his brother’s son, and he has no child of his own, but yet—”

“But yet?” said Effingham.

“But yet with all my reasonings to the contrary I find myself still under obligations to him, and it is very irritating to one’s feelings to know that. You are happy Everard; you have felt nothing of the sort, and cannot know the

miseries of such a life,—particularly when the person upon whom you are dependent, is an ill-natured old man.”

“Is he then so very ill-natured?”

“I fly the house whenever I can,” said Charles.

“Which is often enough,” rejoined Everard, smiling.

“Not as often as I could wish to. There is not a single thing that I do or say, but what he remarks; if I alter the style of my hair, he notices it; if I speak rather slowly—”

“I suppose you mean affectedly!” said Effingham, drily.

“If I speak rather slowly,” continued Charles purposely avoiding to notice the interruption, “his next phrase is drawled out to an insufferable length; if I speak quickly, he seems surprised, and bids me repeat whatever I have said again, as if thoroughly to understand it. He mimics me in everything—oh! it is absolute purgatory to be with him.”

Effingham by this time was laughing heartily.

"I congratulate you," said he, after a little while, "I congratulate you, Charles, upon having at last found a person who will thoroughly correct you of your follies. Yes! I can picture an old soldier's dissatisfaction at seeing his long cherished, though unseen heir, turn out a very fool; for you appear so to him, Charles,—and indeed to everybody who is not very intimately acquainted with you."

"A very pleasant mode of consoling me under my misfortune!" said Charles. "My uncle would admire you excessively; run me down as you are doing now, and you would surely gain his heart."

"Exaggeration!"

"Not at all; that he thoroughly dislikes me I am perfectly certain of; indeed, the only person he seems to care for is his sister—aunt Lennox, you know—he is very fond of her, and that is the only good trait in his character, I can discover."

There was a silence for some minutes when Charles had finished speaking, which Effingham broke by enquiring "how he had left the Harolde?"

"How did I leave them?" repeated Charles starting from a reverie in which he was indulging, "perfectly well as to health, Everard."

This was not precisely the answer that Everard wished, so he continued—

"I suppose so; but I meant to enquire what they are doing?—do they intend remaining in the country for any length of time?"

"Oh! I believe they will be in London within a week or two."

"Ah! Is there any addition to their evening circle?"

"What do you mean?"

"Is the cousin there?"

"What cousin?"

"Why, Elfine Harolde's brother."

"Sir Edward Harolde?—No, he is in Derbyshire; and I scarcely ever heard Miss Harolde

speak of him save to scold when she received some long expected letter."

"Which Miss Harolde do you mean?"

"Why Elfine, to be sure."

"I heard him spoken of in very brilliant terms some days ago; he is what the women call a fascinating young man, Charles."

"Indeed," answered Lennox, in a tone of indifference, "I dare say—I never heard anything of him; but he seems to have exercised his power over you, Everard, for he dwells very much in your thoughts—when did you see him last?"

"I never saw him——"

"Never saw him!" exclaimed Charles, "very strange!" And he looked at his friend enquiringly.

Suddenly he turned towards Effingham, and said—

"For what reasons, Everard, have you asked me this long string of questions?—You must have some hidden motive."

"How ridiculous you are, Charles!"

"Not so ridiculous as you imagine; I am a reader of the human heart, you know, and I should wish to read yours at the present moment; but you may save me the trouble by answering my question."

"A modest request!"

"Oh! I do not wish to know from mere curiosity, and I will tell you what I surmise;—I rather fancy you are in love with one of the Haroldes."

Effingham laughed.

"Ah!" said Charles, "that was a laugh to mislead me, but it will not do, Everard—pray, which is it, Elfine or Ada?"

"Not Ada certainly."

"It is Ada certainly."

"What mean you? I, who absolutely hated her—who could not gain a civil word from her after all my assiduities."

"With a neglect of five years to head them,"

interposed Charles, "nevertheless my supposition is truth, my dear Effingham; extremes meet; hatred and love often turn the one to the other—What did you mean by enquiring after the cousin? I should never have found you out but for that; but take care, I rather fancy there is a rival on the tapis; and 'twill cost you something to win Ada, I should imagine, after what has happened."

"Found me out! rival on the tapis! what nonsense!"

"Angry! that is confirmation; and is all I wished for—thank you, Everard."

But Everard did not answer, and they walked on in silence until Charles suddenly exclaimed—

"Impossible!"

"What now?" said Everard.

"Yes," continued Charles, not heeding him, "yes! 'tis she!"

"Who?"

"Coralie. Let us follow—quick, quick!"

"What for? Do let us walk peaceably onwards."

"No, no, I must speak to her."

"Then I beg leave to drop your arm, Charles; I will not enter upon any wild goose chase with you."

"Oh! very well—begone! I do not want you—it is only to give her the picture that I follow."

"But in the street, Charles!"

"But in the street, Everard!" said he, impatiently, "how am I ever to see her again—pshaw! I am losing ground—good morning."

And walking hastily in pursuit of Coralie, he was soon lost sight of by his friend.

Everard strolled slowly homewards, looking about him with the vacant gaze of a loungee; but though his countenance betrayed nothing to common curiosity, his thoughts were busily employed. Startled by the abrupt accusations of Charles with reference to Ada, and in which

his conscience told him there was some truth, he lost that self-possession which generally attended all his actions, and a partial assent was revealed in his demeanour. Vexed with himself for not having repelled his suspicions in a manner more suited to allay them, he was ruminating upon these things, when he was aroused by the pronunciation of his name very near him, and turning to whence the sound proceeded, he beheld Mr. Harolde apparently out of breath close to him, with Ada on his arm.

“Ha! Everard,” said he, with extended hand as soon as he was a little composed, “I am not going to cut your acquaintance for the whimsey of a girl of eighteen; so please to count me still as your friend—as the friend of your father, young gentleman. We are in town—at my sister’s—Lady Granard—perhaps, you know her?”

“I have that pleasure,” said Effingham, who had exchanged bows with Ada, not without

a little constraint on his part, though there was none on hers.

"All the better! Come and call on us very often, do you hear?—never mind when—we shall be always happy to see you—shall we not, Ada?"

"Certainly," answered his daughter gently, without the slightest shade of pride or embarrassment, and smiling as she spoke.

"Well, good bye for the present, Everard; we cannot stop any longer—Elfi is in the carriage at the other end of the street; Ada and I only got out to make a few purchases, when luckily I saw you—good bye, once again. Come, Ada, shake hands with him—it's all over between you now; and Everard, forget and forgive, she's a forward little thing after all, and you may get a better wife some of these days. That's right, my girl! you were the greatest transgressor against the contract, and yours should be the first advances."

"Well—and are they not, papa?"

"Yes, my dear—capital! Everard, your hand—that's it—you are friends now, I hope. Come to dinner some day, will you, Everard?"

And congratulating himself upon the bond of peace, which he thought he had established between his daughter and his friend, old Mr. Harolde pursued his way to the carriage, and Everard was left once more alone.

Strange were the thoughts of Effingham; he had spoken to Ada Harolde, the loving and the rejected!—for he knew he was beloved; he had read in those dark blue eyes the secret of her heart; in the moment of parting, when they were fixed with such a look of agonized enquiry upon him, it was revealed; pride, paralyzed for a moment, forgot its task, and in that stedfast gaze of misery he saw that Ada Harolde loved.

And whom?—one, who knew not the worth of the heart he had slighted, until reflection bade him sigh over the treasure he had lost.

Yes! the heart of Effingham was bowing

unto the spells of memory; and the pulse that had throbbed calmly in the presence of his betrothed, now beat in feverish excitement when remembrance called back her image to his mind.

But now, when he stood once more in her presence, under the thrall of his new enchantment, when he understood the distant look, the cold voice, the immoveability of feature, which Ada Harolde had practised to veil the love she cherished silently in the recesses of her heart, her whole demeanour was changed: at the call of her father, the smile was ready on her lips to welcome him to their home—the hand was cordially extended to meet his—and Everard, marking every expression of her face, which varied to each impulse that swayed her, discerned a friendliness of behaviour totally foreign to her general manner, and asked himself, if love had wrought the change?—Was ease, was composure, were smiles the signs of that passion, such as it would take root in the

bosom of Ada Harolde? And his heart answered they were not.

“Then wherefore came that change?” again he asked, “had that deep feeling so soon sunk into indifference?—if so, how passing light,” he murmured, “is the love of woman! Such as I pictured her a few moments since I could have done much for her forgiveness—such as she is, the cold neglect of years will never quicken to a warmer wish!”

Fool! pride had wrought a change—and yet she loved thee—pride, that had whispered, marked coldness would betray the dear bought secret of her life, that must for ever remain unknown—had she not plighted her vows unto another?

Occupied by the thoughts that thronged in his mind, Effingham slowly sauntered towards home. On his way thither he encountered Charles Lennox, who, from a fruitless chase after Coralie, was returning to his uncle's in a very discontented mood.

"Well, Charles," said Effingham, as he met him, "what success?"

"Success!" answered he, rather angrily, "the tiresome little thing escaped me after all! Just as I had nearly overtaken her, a gentleman's carriage drove up to the side of the street where we were, and springing into it, she completely, for this time at least, evaded the interview I so much wished to take place. However, I give her the credit of not doing it on purpose, for I saw she did not know I was following her. Oh! I am so fatigued, exhausted—I walked so fast, Everard! I shall not recover the effects of the exercise for three or four days."

"Poor Charles!" said Everard, in an ironically compassionate tone, "I do not doubt but that you feel your disappointment deeply—I pity you! and so will Colonel Lennox, I dare say."

"Hush, Everard! by Heaven! there he is on the other side of the road; and I, like a
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dutiful nephew, must cross over to him, I fear ;
for he sees me, I perceive—good morning !”

And the friends separated ; Charles to join
his uncle, and Effingham to pursue his way
home.

CHAPTER XIV.

Oh ! she is beautiful—upon her brow,
Her pure white brow I see a trace
Of passion, hid beneath the glow
That lightens on her lovely face.

Yes ! erst I read that calm repose,
As if no feeling warmed her breast,
Or melted unto others' woes
But slept in one unbroken rest.

But now I feel my heart is thine !
But now I know thou art all life !—
And I must worship at thy shrine,
Though love to me bring care and strife.

“ I will wear no jewels to night, Ada,” said
Elfine, one evening as she sat before the glass
arranging her dress for a ball, “ I will wear no

jewels to-night—I look very pretty without them—Do you not think so?”

And she laughingly placed herself before Ada, who replied with a smile—

“Suppose I punish your vanity by saying, no?”

“Ah! your smile would say yes.”

“And I might answer, you are the most determined self-worshipper I ever knew.”

“Answer what you like; but remember I will have my revenge. I will not admire you—and I intended to do so I assure you.”

“Come, Elfine, are we not foolish?”

“Yes, indeed; but no matter, folly must have its range as well as wisdom; besides, I must own that I do think myself a very pretty young lady.—Pretty?—yes, that is the right word to express my personal beauty—a kind of wax-doll face, a proportionable pigmy figure, and some grace in my movements; thanks to Monsieur La Borde le fils, who taught us les graces. Now, beautiful is the expression due

to you, Ada; all its attributes are yours; majesty of mien tempered with gentleness—”

“ That will do, Elfine, leave my qualifications for another day.”

“ There! that is just your way, Ada; you will let me expatiate as long as I like upon my dear little self, yet when I touch upon you, I am always stopped with ‘ nonsense!—quite enough for once, Elfi ’ or some other sweetly-bitter interruption to my theme. But a truce to anger—here is Leontine coming to warn us that aunt is ready, and round our coaches throng the white gloved beaux—I wonder where Charl—Mr. Lennox is to-night? Arranging his dress for some petite soirée, no doubt; or, if he has no engagement on his hands, hanging over the glass enamoured of himself. I cannot imagine how he employs his time all day, Ada; he seems so very idle.”

“ Perhaps he muses upon beautiful eyes!” said Ada, smiling.

LADY GRANARD'S NIECES.

cried Elfine, "yes—that is it. He had, to understand the puzzle of all and all times—woman—and so loses a folly; for who will, who ever can tell us, Ada?—None, none. But he is very foolish in other respects—I am not quite so foolish." And here she gave a little sigh—"Is he not, Ada absolute petit-maitre?"

She lurked upon Ada's lips as she spoke, Elfine, and replied—

"but he has some sense, nevertheless, to allow it to be seldom used. And he continued with a slightly malicious smile is so trifling!—so very much like a child's everything, but his moustache; so yet so obstinate; if he ever marry, his wife will often have to blush for his folly."

"That is what I am thinking of," said

"That is what you are thinking of?"

repeated Ada, another quiet smile escaping her.

“ Ah!” exclaimed Elfine, blushing deeply, “ what do you mean? Do you hear what Leontine says? Aunt is in the drawing-room waiting for us.”

And she sprang lightly from the apartment, while her cousin as quickly followed her.

“ Eh! vous êtes ravissantes, mes anges,” said Lady Granard, as her two nieces entered the boudoir, “ come here, let me look at you—there, that will do—I can see you now very well. Yes, that blue satin dress with the tunic of Honiton lace, looped up with diamonds and roses, becomes you exceedingly, Ada, and that spray of brilliants in your hair is very prettily placed; vos couleurs sont bien choisies, ma biche. What! not a single jewel upon you, little Elfine? Ah! petite trompeuse, you would attract by your simplicity. And yet that pale sea green gauze worked with silver, and seemingly bound round the waist by that wreath

of carnations, becomes the rich colour on your cheek, Elfi!—and those long black curls falling from beneath a garland of the same beautiful flowers, are arranged with the most exquisite taste. I see, I see I have transmitted my sceptre ere I knew it, and I must sink from the rank of a beauty scarcely *passée*, to that of a chaperone, an old aunt.”

“ Oh! look in your glass, aunt, and see what it whispers you; still beautiful, still fascinating, what are two poor debutantes in the art of pleasing to one on whom Time has but showered his favours, has but given a richer tint to the light graces of youth!”

And Elfine spoke this with sincerity.

“ Hush, hush, little flatterer!” said Lady Granard, yet inwardly pleased with the compliment of her niece; as she felt it to be partly true; for no one could look upon her fine face and form, and wish her younger than she seemed. Dark, beautiful, and majestic, yet with all that gentleness of demeanour that ren-

ders a woman so attractive, thirty years had not stolen one grace from the lovely features that shone with an expression of playfulness and thought, which might have revealed to an attentive observer, a kind and tender heart yet unchilled by the worldly dross that mingled with its richer ore.

"Aunt! do you call me a flatterer?" said Elfine, pouting.

"The carriage is waiting—where is your uncle, my love?" said Lady Granard, not heeding her.

"In the library," answered Ada.

"Good evening!" said Lady Granard, as she descended the stairs, half opening as she passed it the door of Mr. Harolde's apartment "Will you not change your mind, Charles, and accompany us to Lady Montrevel's."

"What!" replied Mr. Harolde, answering from a comfortable easy chair placed by the

side of the fire place, "what! to dance the first quadrille with you, Sarah? It's not worth while—good night!"

And echoing his words they departed.

The ball was at its height when they entered; which pleased Elfine exceedingly.

"For," said she to her aunt, "the beginning of an evening party is insupportable—such long faces, such measured steps! every person seems moved by machinery, carefully regulated, so as not to execute more than what is absolutely necessary. Do they not feel the music?"

"Some are certainly too stiff," replied Lady Granard, "but do not you, Elfine, follow the other extreme; you must not dance too much; you should not give way to that springing, thrilling sensation you feel when the music begins, but throw a maidenly reticence over your movements; and by seeming to repress the very excess of excitement you feel, you raise a

greater degree of interest in the mind of every beholder, and, take my word for it, you are much more graceful."

"Yes, aunt; but do I ever dance when out, as I sometimes do with you and Ada at home?"

"Ah! bien, bien, mon amie. I suppose we shall see Sir Francis Ellerton to-night, Ada?"

"I cannot tell, aunt; he said he was coming to town very soon; but when I do not exactly know."

"Ah, indeed! Elfine, Mr. Lascelles—what, you leave me to join the quadrille?—well then you must favour him another time."

And as the gentleman walked away, Lady Granard turned to Ada, and whispered—

"Look yonder, Ada—there is Effingham—who would have thought of seeing him here! He has not noticed us yet."

"And I hope will not," said Ada.

“ Oh ! that is impossible—see, he approaches us.”

And Lady Granard at the same moment bowed, while Effingham advanced with a seeming intention to speak. Ada strove to prevent herself from colouring, but could not; yet it was with a clear voice, and an open smile that she addressed him; while he was troubled as he spoke, and paid his compliments confusedly. He raised his eyes to those of Ada, but he read nothing there save a calm and gentle welcome, and still more puzzled than before, his sought the ground in silence.

Lady Granard seeing his confusion, pitied it; she entered into a trifling conversation with spirit; and by talking much, and listening little, gradually gave him time to recover himself.

“ Poor fellow !” she thought, “ it must be disagreeable after having been refused to be obliged to speak with her—and he loves her too—I can see that ! poor fellow !”

Meantime Elfine had returned to the side of her aunt, where she was quickly followed by her old friend Charles Lennox."

"You here!" said she, opening her large dark eyes to their fullest extent, for she had not perceived him until then, although he had been standing for some time near her.

"Exactly so, Miss Harolde—must not I follow wherever you go?" answered he.

"Now, do not be silly, I pray you, but let me introduce you to my aunt."

"Did you speak to me Elfine?" asked Lady Granard, hearing the last word.

"Yes, aunt; Mr. Lennox wishes to be introduced."

And the introduction was made.

"Will you favour me with the next quadrille, Miss Harolde?" said Charles Lennox, after some minutes' conversation.

"Am I inclined to dance just now?" said Elfine, as if speaking to herself—"yes, I

think so—yes,” she continued, addressing Charles—“yes, Mr. Lennox, I will.”

“In bestowing a favour you are kind, Miss Harolde,” answered Charles, with some degree of haughtiness in his voice, “for you seldom appear to oblige any one save yourself.”

“You could not have paid me a greater compliment,” Elfine rejoined. “I always prided myself upon that very peculiarity, and I am glad to hear it confirmed by you.”

“Would you do me the honour?” said a gentleman, approaching Elfine with a low bow; he has been mentioned before as Mr. Lascelles.

“Of what?” asked she, after a long pause, during which she had been waiting for a further explanation of the few words he had addressed to her.

“The quadrille,” murmured the gentleman, in an exquisitely modulated soft voice.

“Quadrille! I am not engaged to you, I believe!”

"Pardon me—her ladyship introduced—do not you remember?"

"I certainly remember the introduction, but not the engagement you allude to."

"I do not say it was a determinate, but a presumptive answer you gave me—I only hoped for a happier conclusion. Will you deign to tell me whether you will agree to be my partner for the present dance?"

"I am engaged, I am sorry to say."

"Ah! then my happiness must be deferred—shall I hope to a definite period of time? shall I say for the next combined series of figurative evolutions?"

"For the next dance I am disengaged."

"Then perhaps you will mark it in the tablets of memory as mine?"

Elfine bowed, and he walked away.

"I shall have a pleasant partner," she observed to Charles, as he led her to their place in the quadrille, "do not you think so? If I have forgotten any of the longer words in

the English language, he will certainly recal them to my mind; for which I ought to thank him, as I have now been three years from school. In return I must make myself very agreeable, I suppose."

"That will be no new lesson to Miss Harolde; particularly if the party be a lately acquired acquaintance."

"Indeed! Do you mean to insinuate that I am not so agreeable to an old friend as to a new one, then? You are peculiarly charitable in your opinion of me, I must confess. Pray what has thus shaken your former thoughts of me?—for at least when you pretended to unravel my character, you spoke not of such a fault as this. Alas! perhaps I have unknowingly offended you in some trifling minutiae of politesse; perhaps, I have not offered you my flacon when overcome by my too voluble conversation; or my fan, when you have felt faint: or do you wish to quarrel with me, as you have yet found no subject to converse upon,

and you think an argument will relieve your spirits of their present dulness?"

Charles seemed to recollect himself, and answered the irony of Elfine with a smile, saying at the same time, that he had wished to see whether he could ruffle her temper.

"A very pretty confession! Do you amuse yourself then by trying to put ladies in a passion by way of studying their characters?"

"Sometimes."

"You will never succeed with me then; not that my nature is so angelic that I cannot be angry—quite the contrary; but that I shall never be in a passion with you, did you annoy me ever so much."

"And why?"

"Because it would not be politic. You wish to know my real character, and I wish to prevent you from acquiring that knowledge; now, if I conceal anger, one of the chief keys to a woman's mind, you will always be at fault, for how are you to know what I love or hate, or

with what I am pleased or displeased? And if you are not certain on those heads, what can your wisdom suggest as to the rest? for as to your skill in the language of the eyes, I do not believe in it."

"Yet I gave you clear proofs that I knew it; but let that pass; I will not strive to convince you now—tell me why you wish to conceal your real character from me?"

"From you!" said Elfine, hastily—"from every person, you mean."

"From every person let it be then," said Charles, with a smile which infinitely provoked Elfine; "tell me why you cloak yourself in hypocrisy?"

"Because it amuses me. Hypocrisy! You speak plainly, Mr. Lennox—but I do not care; every woman is a hypocrite more or less."

"Yes, that I learnt early enough; but never before heard a lady avow it."

"Then they were greater dissemblers than even I am."

“ You have too humble an opinion of your own merits,” answered Charles, with a smile ; “ I never met with a lady who could equal you in your favorite pastime. Yet listen to me, Miss Harolde,” continued he, and he spoke with such sudden emphasis as to make Elfine start. I know you—as well as you do yourself, and that, perhaps, is saying much, for I see you have acquired a thorough knowledge of your own character.—I know you ; and were you to double every artifice, and mask every word you speak by giving it a different tone to that which the heart dictates, yet you could not deceive me. Once or twice I have thrown you off your guard—in those moments I caught a clue to your every thought and feeling, and now, in your intercourse with me you can never seem other than what you really are ; for I can read your heart.”

And Charles, though not such a perfect magician as he professed himself to be, spoke truth in this last particular. He saw Elfine

loved him—or to use a milder word, liked him ; the adieu, the blush, the withdrawal of the hand, had revealed her secret, for he knew that those marks of passion however slight they might appear in another woman, were much from Elfine. He had never seen her betray such confusion save with him—could he alone then disconcert the accomplished actress, and did not that speak in his favour ? Besides, reasoned Charles within himself, why should she take so much trouble to tease me, did she not feel an interest in the pursuit ?

This was conclusive ; and Charles felt satisfied that Elfine loved him.

And he loved her in return.

Attracted by her singular character, he had looked at, watched, and studied her, until whether present or not, she was always in his thoughts. He saw that with her, true feeling, good sense, and firm principles, lay hid under a mass of folly ; and he feared not to think of

her as a wife—why should he, indeed!—was he not twice as foolish himself in other respects?

Reader, that is an observation of my own, not of Charles Lennox.

And he knew Elfine loved him—yes, truly he did; and when a vain man knows *that*, Heaven pity the poor woman with whom he has to deal, if she has not a sufficient quantity of pride to awe him into silence! What inuendos, what half-revealed selfishness, what ostentatious kindness she must endure—verily, it must be purgatory on earth! A woman in such a case should conquer the appearance of her love—coquette a little—bring the gentleman to a proper sense of her merits, and his demerits; and then—why then, she may marry him, if she yet can love the conceited creature, and bear with his vanity for the rest of her life—for women do strange things sometimes!

The coquetry employed in this case should be the perfection of art, the essence of *savoir faire*. You must restrain every sting of pride,

of ill-temper, and disappointment, and be as amiable to the person you love as to every other gentleman ; pay him as much attention, but let that attention sometimes appear forced ; let him fancy your mind is employed upon some other object ; answer a question now and then as if you did not hear it ; and at a ball, soirée, or dejeuner, when you perceive that he is looking at you, and thinks you do not know it, let your eyes follow the handsomest, or most agreeable man in the room ; then drop them suddenly and hastily as if you noticed, for the first time, he was watching you. By these means, my gentle readers, a woman may make her lover doubt his own power, without coming to an open rupture, and bring him as humbled and submissive to her feet as his exquisite presumption deserves.

“ True, such a task as this requires good acting, but every lady is capable of that, if she attend a little to her natural abilities.

At least Elfine Harolde could profit by the

lesson; and though Charles was not so selfish, or so vain as many would have been at his discovery, and therefore did not deserve the full punishment, still he was wrong in having been betrayed into such a boast—betrayed he was, as Elfine had teased him enough, to be sure, and her defiance wrought him to folly; for he knew that to give a woman a hint that a man knows she loves him, ere he has by an open avowal assured her of his affections, is the very way to bid her stifle that love if she has but one atom of pride in her whole composition.

A thousand times Charles Lennox wished the words he had last uttered unsaid, and hoped that Elfine had not understood them.

But the meaning of his speech had flashed like lightning through the mind of Elfine, even as he spoke.

Does he mean, can he mean that he sees I love him—that I shun to reveal myself as I am lest he should know the love that lives within me? Have I loved him ere he has loved me;

and what was foolish sport turned into reality ? It is indeed so—I am an offering then to his vanity—he watched me for this—he triumphs over me now—but he shall not, he shall not for any length of time!—I will make him mine—and then, then cast him off; no word has betrayed me, and I am yet myself!”

Such were the thoughts of Elfine; and it was in this spirit of awakened pride that assuming a tone of indifference, she answered him :

“ I must try then to support myself under the affliction of this untoward discovery,” she said ; “ and yet after months spent in the task of concealing my character from a stranger, it is a hard thing to find myself revealed in my true colours at last.”

And she smiled easily enough ; and Charles was led to believe she had not understood him.

He looked at her, and it confirmed him in his opinion ; she was carelessly pulling a rose to pieces, and there was a slight shade of fatigue upon her countenance. One thing alone

gave him some suspicions, and that was the circumstance of her eyes being obstinately bent down upon the flower she was destroying; but suddenly as if she had known those very doubts, and wished to kill them in their birth, even while he was gazing upon her, she raised her eyes to his face with a smile—was there a slight increase of blood upon her cheek as she did so? Yes, yet Charles perceived it not; she had felt her colour rising, and held her breath until the emotion passed away.

The dance had not yet finished; Charles and Elfine were yet together, when the former, breaking a short silence that had ensued between them, asked Elfine whether she had perceived him before he came up to speak with her?

“What a singular question!” cried Elfine; “no, I did not.”

“Yet you looked at me three times, though I own you did not acknowledge the acquaintance.”

"Oh!" exclaimed Elfine, looking up, and laughing, "that then was the reason of your recent display of ill-humour; your pride was hurt by my not noticing you; but know, I never bow until a gentleman speaks, and thus I do not stare a crowd out of countenance to seek the salutation of a friend. Yet I did not see you to-night."

Charles was silent.

"Will you lead me to my aunt, if you please," said Elfine, as the dance finished.

"Will you not take one tour round the room?" rejoined Charles.

"I am too tired."

"Then I suppose I must obey, though it is with the greatest reluctance I resign you."

"Ah! the music begins again; this is the quadrille for which Mr. Lascelles engaged me. I wonder where he is!"

"You seem anxious for the presence of your partner," said Charles, coldly.

"Oh! not at all," said Elfine, hastily—the

hastiness was feigned. "I—I—you know, Mr. Lennox, I like dancing."

Charles looked, but said nothing.

"Have you remembered your promised favour? Will you accompany me to the room where the quadrille is forming?" said Mr. Lascelles, who approached at this moment.

"With pleasure," said Elfine, taking his offered arm, and withdrawing from the side of Charles, who gazed after her for a moment with distrust and curiosity, and then sauntered towards Effingham, whom he perceived at the other end of the room.

A word or two passed between them, but they soon sank into silence, and quietly watched the progress of the dancers. There is nothing so pleasant, by-the-bye, in a ball-room as to place yourself by the side of a silent friend when you have nothing to say; for there is a sort of sympathy that speaks a companion, yet does not force you to the use of your voice. Immersed in your own thoughts you can thus

agreeably and peaceably pass a quarter of an hour away, and then return fresh to the spirit of the evening.

This Charles Lennox found; and seemingly employed in watching the moving figures before him, pondered upon the manner of Elfine. A doubt, a very reasonable one, it would have been in the opinion of the lady, had entered his mind. Does Elfine Harolde really love me? he asked himself. He had remarked her seeming confusion at his observation upon Mr. Lascelles, her indifference as to his vast penetration, and 'Does she love me?' wound up a long series of questions, which thoughts of woman's supposed fickleness and vanity had suggested.

"She is a flirt," muttered Charles—"a perfect coquette!"

"But the blush!" said Vanity, in answer to his inward exclamation—"the blush! women may be good actresses, still they cannot blush when they will."

" Ah!" replied the doubting Charles, " but it was dusk, I might have been deceived; it was near those detestable velvet curtains, and the deep crimson of their hue might have caused the glow I noticed."

" Then the little hand trembled in yours, did it not?" as instantly rejoined Vanity.

" Oh! that was the perfection of art," was the final answer of Charles; " yes, she is a perfect coquette!"

" How beautiful she is!" murmured a low yet audible voice near Charles.

" Eh! what, Effingham?" said Charles arousing himself from his reverie—" yes, but she is such a coquette! A little coquetry is all very well; it renders a woman agreeable; but she has too much of it."

" What mean you?" asked Effingham; then casting a glance to where Ada Harolde stood, said—" There is the subject of my musings."

Truly, she did look beautiful; she was speaking to her partner with animation, and

the warmth of her manner lent a rich glow to her complexion, and a brilliancy to her deep blue eyes, that Effingham had never before witnessed.

"Is she not beautiful?" asked Effingham.

"So I always told you, Everard, and wished to reason you into that belief," answered Charles, "but my kindness was of no avail, and you have lost a beautiful woman, and an heiress."

"For awhile, Charles, for awhile. She loves me."

Charles started; he thought he felt almost certain that Ada loved Effingham; but that knowledge was only his, only after the breaking off of the engagement, so he had not considered himself privileged to impart it to Effingham, as he deemed it right, that a woman's love, when hopeless, should for ever remain a secret even to the person who inspires it; and he asked hastily—

"Why do you think so? who told you so?"

"No one save myself, Charles; yet I am not the less certain of it. She loves me, and—I love her; she has pride, but I will conquer it; she is the only woman I ever will love; and I will win her, though it cost me years of patience."

"Sagacious and plausible resolutions, Everard; meanwhile she becomes the wife of Sir Francis Ellerton."

"Lennox!"

"Everard!"

"Do you mean what you say?"

"Certainly. I told you she was the intended bride of Sir Francis Ellerton, and she is so."

"It is a report—it is a report."

"No such thing, I assure you. I will explain, if you like, how I came by the intelligence."

"Tell me quickly then."

"I have an old aunt—Miss Harolde has a young one; between these two you must conceive there is a mutual friend, whose name is

Mrs. Scott, and whose business seems to be the gathering together of all kinds of news, and retailing it to her numerous acquaintance ; well, Lady Granard dropped a hint regarding the marriage of her niece—Mrs. Scott followed the clue—and lo ! Sir Francis is the man !”

“ It must be untrue ; it can be only surmise,” said Everard.

“ I rather think not,” answered Charles. “ From what I saw when at Harolde Hall, I suspected as much, although I did not think it worth while to mention it to you.”

“ Indeed, aunt, I could not. Mr. Lascelles would take me down to supper, and there is an excuse for me, as you do not often meet with such agreeable partners.

Charles was silent ; Elfine had just passed him.

“ Go on, Charles,” said Effingham “ you saw—?”

But the eyes of Charles were fixed upon the retreating figure of Elfine. She was hanging

upon the arm of Mr. Lascelles, and there was an expression of pleased attention upon her countenance, that must, in Charles's jealous fancy have rendered her very interesting to the person with whom she was speaking.

"Charles," said Everard again, "will you answer me?—what did you notice between Sir Francis Ellerton and Ada Harolde?"

"Why, that he was very attentive to her, and that she suffered that attention, as if it were not altogether displeasing to her."

Everard replied not, and Charles soon after perceived that he was no longer in the ball-room. He wandered about for some time, not approaching Elfine, but watching her from a distance, till tired with the scene, and with himself, he was making his way through the crowd to depart, when suddenly the following words caught his attention.

"She is the sister of Sir Edward Harolde, and I am told she has a noble fortune; I shall follow it up of course—it is rarely a girl renders

herself so agreeable for nothing." Gentle ladies do not flirt *too* much or may be you will have the latter observation applied to you likewise.

Charles turned and beheld Mr. Lascelles.

"Renders herself so agreeable for nothing?" muttered Charles. "Am I then mistaken in her character, her love, or is this some new feint to blind me? I will watch her yet more narrowly—no, no, I will not give her up as yet."

Poor Charles! he boasted himself a reader of woman's heart, and yet knew not its language. I do not say, however, but that he was more conversant with it than some others of his sex, still how far was he from a thorough knowledge of its different moods!

He left the room loving the pretty flirt that had enthralled him, yet secretly despising the various arts with which she wove his chain.

Can you explain that, oh ye, who have felt the power of love?

Little Elfine, however, was much to be pitied

after all, for pride and love were at decided variance within her. She thought upon the expression with which Charles spoke the words that had so annoyed her, and her cheek flushed to the deepest crimson, while she inwardly vowed she would never, never listen to him again. But then she felt too that she was partly in the wrong—had she not teased, defied him?—was there not some excuse for his conduct? She knew there was, and yet she would not listen to its pleadings; she hurried the thought away; and hoping, earnestly hoping that the eyes of Charles were upon her, she endeavoured to attract the most devoted attentions from Mr. Lascelles.

In this line of conduct may be traced the difference between the pride of Elfine, and that of Ada. Ada would have repaid an injury, an insult, with silent contempt; Elfine would have sought for its reparation: for Ada would have disdained the atonement, if it were bought by acting, while Elfine would have employed every

talent of her mind to wrap herself in *feint*, so that she accomplished her purpose. *Both* passions were faulty because carried to *extremes*, and under no guidance save *that of feeling*; yet both might have been useful if curbed within their proper limits, and kept under the control of judgment.

CHAPTER XV.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

* * * *

The pattern grows, the well depicted flower,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom ; buds, and leaves, and sprigs
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble fingers of the fair ;
A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
With most success when all besides decay.

THE TASK.

"OH ! the comforts of an English fireside,"
said Elfine Harolde, one evening as she drew
her chair towards the blazing hearth.

"How I love these long evenings when all is dark without, and bright within—when as the shadows gather round you, beautiful visions, presaging joy and peace, throng in the fading light, and speak the promises of the future half accomplished!

"Ah! you are expatiating as usual, Elfine, upon your favourite pastime of building castles in the air," laughed Lady Granard, "but I shall soon destroy that pleasure;—ring for lights, dear."

"Oh! not yet, aunt—except, indeed, it be to awaken Mr. Lennox, who seems to have fallen asleep; I have not heard his voice for the last hour."

"Miss Harolde!" exclaimed Charles, who hearing Elfine name him, aroused himself from the silence in which he was indulging.

"Mr. Lennox!" said Elfine, in exactly the same tone, and then added, "You see, aunt, he was in the land of dreams."

"I must say," said Mr. Harolde, interrupting

Charles who was about to speak, "I must say, Sarah, that you and Elfi are generally too hard upon my godson—of what do you accuse him? Ah! if we men were to mind half what your tantalizing sex say to us, we should be miserable, indeed!"

"Am I in the proscription too, then?" said Lady Granard smiling, "but I am sure Mr. Lennox will not say so."

To this appeal Charles of course replied in the negative, and added, turning to Elfine as he spoke, "Every word from Miss Harolde, though it were upon the most trivial subject, must have a weight, an undue weight with him."

"Your compliments are very inexplicable of late," answered Elfine. "I suppose that was meant as a compliment?"

"Not exactly," said Charles, smiling.

"Now you pique me—tell me then for what did you intend it?"

"For nothing but to excite your curiosity."

"But it was a compliment."

"It was not; will you think it such when explaining my meaning I make you understand that your words with me have more weight than I should wish them to have."

"What mean you?" said Elfine, fixing her eyes upon his face for one moment, then bending them studiously on the fire, as the glow reflected on her cheek was brightened by a sudden blush that shot across her features. "Ah! I read your riddle," continued she, laughing heartily, as the deepened colour resumed its natural hue, "you insinuate that you bow unwillingly to the power of my fascinations. Ah! ah! you are lately arrived from the Continent where compliments pass for current money—I am sorry I cannot repay you in your own coin. But I will," added she, after a moment's pause, and addressing Charles in a soothing tone, "I believe you," she said, "I believe you,—and would do so, even if you were to tell me that the chains I have thrown around your heart, are as firmly knit as this one."

And she touched a gold chain which encircled her throat.

Charles pondered upon her words.

No woman, thought he, could touch thus freely upon the subject nearest to her heart so unreservedly, so coolly—she does not love me.

Poor Charles! misled again, with all his knowledge of woman's heart, and woman's eyes.

Pretty coquette! how your heart danced with delight as you watched that expression of thought steal over the countenance of Charles, and knew by its gloomy shade, that the belief you had wished eradicated, was shaken to its base.

"You have read my riddle right, Miss Harolde, if you call it one," answered Charles, rousing himself to speak.

"And a very entertaining one it was to the listeners," said Mr. Harolde, "only, if I may be allowed so to express myself, I think there was too much salt concealed under too little

sugar, and salt and sugar do not taste well, together, Elfine."

This was said significantly enough.

"No, uncle?" cried Elfine. "Oh, par-ex-ample! sometimes they do—for instance, in milk soup."

Here Mr. Harolde laughed, and Lady Granard, who liked neither the riddle, or the answer, took the opportunity to end the conversation by saying, "Well, I must leave you—Mr. Lennox will excuse me? I have promised to be at Mrs. Seyton's this evening and it is time to dress. Elfine; you do not come of course?"

"No, my cold is too bad for me to venture out to-night, and so I must amuse myself as well as I can at home—*quel malheur!*"

"Then adieu!" said Lady Granard, rising and leaving the apartment, "Ada is dressing, is she not?"

"Yes, aunt."

And Mr. Harolde, Charles, and Elfine were left to themselves.

"Here are the lights!" said Elfine, "The paper uncle, did you say? there it is. Oh! where is my needle? Now, Mr. Lennox, if you would be so kind as to pass me that frame—thank you,—and that knot of wool—or no, I shall not work to night, 'twill tire me—will you play a game of chess with me, Mr. Lennox?"

"With pleasure," answered Charles, and the chessboard was produced.

"A game of chess," said Mr. Harolde, "ah! that is my favourite pastime—Elfine is my scholar, Charles; I must see who will be the conqueror."

And laying down the newspaper which he had taken up, he drew his chair towards the table.

Whether Charles was pleased with this movement of Mr. Harolde's, I cannot determine, suffice it to say that the game was a silent one, for the players scarcely spoke a word. This

silence, however, was highly complimented by Elfine's uncle, who after praising his niece for her taciturnity, added, "I never saw a game of chess more properly conducted—no smiles, no unnecessary tatling, or exclamations; but all gravity and wisdom. Your skill was not, perhaps—"

"A person wishes to speak with you, sir," said a footman, entering at the moment.

"Confound the fellow! must I be disturbed at this time of night? Tell him to call again in the morning."

"His name is John Simpkins, he says sir."

"John Simpkins? ah! then tell him to wait; yes, yes, poor fellow! I must see him—I will go to him in a moment."

"Who is he uncle?" asked Elfine.

"Why the man Ada and I met the other morning."

"Whose house was burnt down?"

"The same. I told him to call, and he has done so, you see, though at an awkward time

of night, I must confess; still it would be a pity to send him away for nothing—and, perhaps, he had not time to come hither before.”

“I dare say not, uncle,” said Elfine, as Mr. Harolde left the apartment, “he told you, did he not, that he was engaged all day?”

“Shall I place the board for you?” said Charles.

“Yes,” answered Elfine, with an air of ennui, “there is nothing else to do, so we must play another game, I suppose; the last was mine, was it not?”

“Yes,” answered Charles, “you are kind to allow me *ma revanche*.”

“Lend me a pencil for a moment, Mr. Lennox, and I will put it down in my memorandum; how many games do you think I have won this year?”

“Ten?”

“Nineteen—but lend me a pencil.”

Charles, in complying with this request, put his hand into his waistcoat pocket to search for the article required, and on doing so, by accident drew from thence a small miniature which, disentangling itself from the pencil case, fell upon the table, and rolled towards Elfine. She took it up and was going to return it to Charles when suddenly her eyes rested on the lineaments before her with a look of surprise, and changing colour, she held it fast within her hand. Charles watched her emotion and in a tone of eagerness asked whether she knew the original?

The miniature was the one Coralie had dropped at Mrs. Parker's, and which Charles always carried about with him, in the hopes of some day returning it to its owner.

"Know him!" exclaimed Elfine, in a tone in which surprise still predominated, "know him, said you?—yes—where; where did you have this?"

"On the beach at Dover," said Charles, "a lady dropped it; and I have not had an opportunity of returning it since then."

"At Dover! a lady!" cried Elfine, in a voice of still greater astonishment, "tell me, who was she?"

"I do not know," replied Charles, "I am not acquainted with either of the parties; they seem, however, Miss Harolde, to interest you deeply."

Elfine did not answer him; she was deciphering the writing on the back of the portrait.

"Coralie de Villeblanche—she must be a Frenchwoman; and what is this in his handwriting? 'Aime moi toujours, comme tu m'as juré de le faire devant Dieu, et les nœuds qui nous rapproche, ne seront jamais pour nous deux, que les nœuds de l'amour, E. H. Is he married then—is she his wife! It would seem so from those words—and here again are the ciphers E. H. and C. H. entwined together—Coralie de Villeblanche is now changed for his name—it

must be so—she is his wife ! This then was the reason of his silence, his absence—you say, you do not know either the lady or the gentleman, Mr. Lennox ?”

“ Neither.”

“ Nor by sight ?”

“ By sight I do.”

“ Both ?”

“ Both, Miss Harolde.”

“ Is she very, very beautiful, tell me ?”

“ She is beautiful.”

“ I thought so—no wonder he shunned us—what am I to him now ?”

Charles started, and the colour deepened upon his cheek ; words came to his lips, and died away without a sound—could he ask the reason of her emotion—had he ever whispered she was aught to him save in jest, and should he risk for one moment of satisfied curiosity, the happiness of years ? He knew the value of the stake, and he refused it ; he said nothing ; but as he saw Elfine still gazing on the portrait

with a movement of impatient jealousy, he stretched forth his hand to receive it. Elfine looked up.

"I cannot return this miniature, Mr. Lennox," said she, you must allow me to keep it; I alone can return it to its rightful owner."

"If you mean that you intend to give it to its original, Miss Harolde, you will not do so; it is the property of the lady who dropped it; therefore, I beg you will again place it in my hands."

This Charles said in a decided tone, and it was in an entreating one that Elfine replied:

"Indeed, I cannot; if you knew who he is—"

"Tell me, Miss Harolde!" interrupted Charles, eagerly.

"No, I must not, but believe me, Mr. Lennox, this portrait shall travel to the right person; you must leave it in my possession."

"That I cannot consent to; Miss Harolde you will give it to me," answered Charles.

And he offered to take the miniature; but Elfine held it fast.

"The trifle we quarrel about is of no consequence to you, though it may be of much to me, and therefore," said Elfine, coolly placing it in her work-box, "it shall remain in my hands."

"I cannot force it from you," answered Charles, angrily, "but you must allow me to wonder over that perversity of temper that makes you pursue so strange a course for one who, howsoever dear he is to you, merits perhaps, but little of your attention."

Elfine for a moment seemed transfixed with astonishment, as she listened to his words; then laughing heartily as if a sudden and ludicrous thought had struck her, she answered, "How know you that?" while Charles sat looking indignantly at her, until seeming to recover from her fit of mirth she asked him in a very soft and gentle voice, although its tones were not entirely free from a slight accentuation

of malice, whether they should pursue their game of chess?

"Chess!" exclaimed Charles, as he pushed the board from him, and half rose from his seat.

"We may as well, Mr. Lennox," said Elfine, with a quiet smile, "it is not very late."

"You say right, Miss Harolde," answered Charles assuming all at once a cold and collected air, "true, true, we must finish—I am ready—it is your move."

Poor Charles! jealousy was racking his heart and yet he sat there moving the castles and the pawns with the greatest possible appearance of interest, while Elfine meanwhile rejoiced in his discomfiture. The end came at last however, and Charles rising from his seat, bade adieu to Elfine, as he looked at his watch.

What a stay to embarrassment a watch sometimes is!

They shook hands; how coldly were they joined, how coldly parted!

And Charles was gone in another minute.

The moment he left the room, Elfine sprang joyously from her chair, and clapped her hands together; then suddenly she stopped and covering her face with them, seemed lost in thought; until, again slowly raising her head, the smile lightened on her lip although tears were falling from beneath the jetty lashes that veiled her bright dark eyes. "He loves me!" said she "he loves me—I have not given my heart to one who cared not for it."

She walked towards the table and taking the miniature from her work-basket, kissed it a thousand times; "Thanks, thanks, dear Edward," she again exclaimed "oh! I love you better than ever—without you I should never have known that Charles loved me!"

And now a shade of thought darkened her countenance; her mind wandered from Charles, and centred in the object before her. Long and stedfastly did she gaze upon the portrait; carefully did she scrutinize the writing; till hearing footsteps approaching, she placed it hastily in her box.

“ I must not tell uncle. I must not tell Ada of this ; it shall rest between him and me. Oh ! I wish he would come to us, and then all might be explained.”

And so saying, she met Mr. Harolde, who then entered with an account of Charles Lennox's departure, and returned to her work.

CHAPTER XVI.

Braid thine hair with pearls,
String thine arms with jewels bright—
Deck thine eyes with smiles,
Let them sparkle in the light !
Hasten to place the wreath on thy brow,
Beautiful bride ! beautiful bride !
He is awaiting thee now
At the altar's side.

And in long soft folds
Let the white veil round thee twine ;
Like sunshine through a cloud,
Thy beauty seems divine !
Hasten to place the wreath on thy brow
Beautiful bride ! etc.

Chase the tear away,
Hide thy bosom's inward strife—
Though the vows thou speakest
Are bonds that bind for life.
Hasten to place the wreath on thy brow,
Beautiful bride ! etc.

Yet fear not, gentle one,
Those holy words to speak,
A passion such as his,
That vow will never break.
Hasten to place the wreath on thy brow,
Beautiful bride, etc.

THE time had arrived when Ada had promised to become the wife of Sir Francis Ellerton, and to Elfine she seemed to welcome it with serenity, if not with contentment. The rest of the family, who had not a suspicion of the truth, saw in her seriousness, but the usual consequence of her approaching marriage; for the wise and the foolish, the grave and the gay,

must all feel for a time the utter change that steals upon them, as the heart, severed from its first affections, learns to centre its love upon one who promises to respond to that attachment through life, but finds too soon the fallacy of that hope.

Alas! alas! and do the dreams of youth flee away, and leave the heart tenantless and cold!—doth the fire that burnt so brightly sink into utter darkness!—the love thought so deep, so enduring, into indifference! Oh! wherefore not carry to the grave the lightheartedness of youth! But no, it cannot be; and wisely was an irrevocable decree pronounced against it—should we not love the beautiful beings of our earth too much, and bow unto idolatry, if ever bright and ever loving, they enchained our senses and our hearts!

Youth passes—the heart changes—calmer passions reign; at every step in our onward path, life loses a charm, until each spell that enthralled us is broken, and we seek

the grave untrammelled by those affections, which fraught our youth with happiness or misery.

Love is youth's life or death; the spring of all delight, or the source of dark, unfathomable agony. Yet must we love, for the heart owns no guide—time is its only master; yet must we love, and not till youth hath run its course will that passion deaden into silence.

But there are some who die beneath that power, who ere the light of youth hath fled their brow, perish from the face of the earth, as wither, beneath the sun, the flowers its scorching yet loved beams consume.

Elfine looked on Ada—her brow was calm, and she dared not question her; oftentimes, indeed, words came to her lips, but she could not utter them, for she dreaded to awaken within her cousin's mind the least remembrance of Effingham. She was unhappy too; since

her last interview with Charles, she had never seen him to speak to for any length of time ; if occasionally they met in society, he shunned her, and his visits were few at Granard House. An explanation she would not come to ; besides, there was no opportunity for it, as he never alluded to the miniature, and her pride forbade her touching on the subject. She felt they were estranged,—her heart whispered, perhaps, for ever !—for no endeavour on her part could win Charles from that cold politeness, in which, since that eventful night, he had wrapt himself.

There was one particular point in the character of Elfine that merits attention ; with all her coquetry she would never act sorrow or pensiveness, although she considered every other feint that could mask her feelings allowable, and would often laugh when she would rather have wept. She considered it hypocrisy to feign a grief which she felt not ; and at times, when really unhappy, she dressed her

face in smiles for fear of falling under that accusation.

The marriage morn of Ada arrived—there was no smile, no blush upon her cheek, and Elfine read her heart in one glance of half-concealed misery, as she stepped from the carriage to the church. How beautiful she looked! her long auburn hair was braided upon her pure white brow, and tressed with pearls, as spotless as the snowy neck on which they fell; the bridal wreath supported a rich lace veil that clung around her, revealing, in its transparent folds, the elegance of the form it entwined; and her arms were hung with pendant jewels—how beautiful she looked! Well might Sir Francis Ellerton have striven for the love of one so fair as Ada Harolde—well might he watch with looks of love her gentle countenance as the soft blush rose upon it, and the dark blue eyes glistened beneath the long, brown lash, while she spoke the fitting vows. Alas! that those musical tones should cover

the heart's falsehood—and he thought she loved him!

The ceremony ended; the arm of Ada was linked in that of her husband, her foot was on the threshold of the church, when by some strange impulse she turned to look towards the altar. As she did so, the blood forsook her cheek, her lips quivered, and her eyes were fixed in astonishment upon some distant object; then quickly, as with a sudden effort, she turned her head away, and drew her veil yet closer around her. Sir Francis did not perceive her emotion; but Elfine, who was close behind, followed the glance of her cousin, and observed in one of the pews of the side aisle, the figure of a gentleman, who rose as the nuptial party left the church—it was that of Effingham.

“Ada, dear Ada! what shall I do without you?” said Elfine to Lady Ellerton, as they stood together for the last time in their own room; “alone! alone!—while we were children

how bitter it was to be separated, but now, now how doubly so!"

"We shall see each other soon again, dearest!" answered Ada—"soon again."

"Yes, Ada, yes," replied Elfine, striving to check the tears that rose within her eyes, "but not as now!"

"Why not?" said Ada. "Do you think I shall not ever love you, Elfine?"

Elfine looked up at her cousin for a moment, then cast her eyes down once more.

"You will, Ada, I know," she said, "not with all my frowardness—and many times have I provoked you—not with all my frowardness have you ever spoken one unkind word to me. Oh! you will love me though all forsake me!"

"What mean you, Elfine?" said Ada, and she unwound the arms of her cousin which were thrown around her neck. But she did not reply—a sob, a sigh—and Elfine wept.

"I know your grief," said Ada—"I have

not been wholly engrossed by selfish feelings ;
Elfine, you love Charles Lennox."

No answer.

"And he loves you," continued Ada.

"He does, he does," said Elfine, starting from her seat ; "but, Ada—" she stopped.

"Something has happened to estrange you from each other—is it not so ?"

"Yes, Ada, yes."

"I perceived it, Elfine. If you can recover his lost esteem do—let not your marriage be—"

She was silent, as if she had said too much. Elfine rose and kissed her.

"Do not talk to me, Ada ; I am very silly to move you thus at parting,"—for tears stood in Ada's eyes—"forgive me—I am very happy—indeed, indeed, I am. I will not despair," added she, with a smile ; "Charles shall be mine—yes, yes, he shall.

But though she said it, she did not feel it would be so.

"Here is aunt; dry your eyes, Ada—she will scold me if she sees you thus."

And Elfine smiled away her tears, as Lady Granard entered.

An hour after Ada Harolde left the home of her childhood for ever.

